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No. 160.

SONG

BY A. F. MORRIS, JR.

Song!—Song!—Song!
For a heart that is sad and sore,
Some gentle whisper of love and voice
To tell of the days of yore.
Sing to me soft and low,
It hath power to soothe my pain;
And try, in that sigh for bygone scenes,
To conjure them back again—
Those scenes of old,
Those blisses of gold,
Oh! bid them return again.
Wild and deep be the strain,
When the murmur is o'er at last,
And pour from the harp all thy music's soul—
Welcome this dream of the past:
No dream to me,
How glad it be,
Is sweet as a dream of the past!
Sing!—Sing!—Sing!
And I'll bless every waver that flows;
No breath so rich as a breath of love,
Nor sweeter the dew on the rose!

Barbara's Fate:

OR,

A BRIDE, BUT NOT A WIFE.

BY MRS. MARY REED CROWELL,
AUTHOR OF "LOVE BLIND," "OATH BOUND," ETC.

CHAPTER V.

PLAYING WITH FATE.

"What does this mean? I pray to be informed. Mr. De Laurian, will you explain? Blanche Chetwynd, what did I tell you?" Blanche turned to hide her sufficed face, but Gervaise confronted her, his eyes flashing.

"And permit me to inquire what you have been telling Miss Chetwynd?"

There was awful fury in his voice as he spoke, that betrayed the rage, the fear he felt lest Blanche knew all yet he was sure she never would have acted as she had, had she dreamed of the true state of affairs.

"I told her, sir, that you were too conscienceless a flirt to care, really, for her; if you made a pretense of it even, it would end as other flirtations have ended."

Her speech came fluently, and her eyes were steadily fixed on his, while her cheek grew pale as she spoke.

De Laurian's lips parted in a relieved smile, and his eyes lost their steely glitter.

"Indeed, Miss Barbara! I am everlastingly indebted to you for such a recommendation to Miss Chetwynd. However, I need hardly say, your words are destined to be proven false."

Barbara sprang to his side in a towering rage.

"Beware, Gervaise De Laurian, how you accuse me of falsehoods! Remember who I am!" Her deep, warning tone made Blanche turn her head in quick surprise, but not quickly enough to see the unspoken threat in De Laurian's eyes, or observe the defiance in Barbara's.

She looked inquiringly at Gervaise, who, with a profound bow to Barbara, laughed assuringly to Blanche.

"I certainly shall not forget who you are. A most beautiful woman, whom few men can see without loving; whom few women can know without envying."

His eyes, now turned so that Blanche might not see his face, were full of that light that shone in them when he murmured to his wife his love assurances; and, as Barbara blushed and smiled in the returning tide of confidence, she extended her hand.

He took it, and pressed it passionately; then raised it to his lips.

All this instantaneous tableau had been acted while Blanche had gone to the edge of the piazza to watch her parents alight. During that second, Gervaise and Barbara had renewed their vows, and apparently fully comprehended each other.

Blanche came through the window toward them.

"They have returned, and now that lunch is ready, why not let us all sit down together? Mr. De Laurian, you surely will stay?"

"If you will promise to go with Miss Barbara and me to the Falls."

Barbara's face did not portray the joy she felt at the prospect of a ride beside her husband, but in her heart she exulted, and secretly pitied Blanche that she, all unconscious, was only invited to ally any suspicions that might have arisen.

Blanche, her cheeks flushed with delight, gave an assent, wondering if Barbara really did think Gervaise was a flirt, and trying to imagine what she would say when she heard that, in spite of all her prophetic warnings, Gervaise De Laurian had actually proposed to her, and that the diamond on her watch-chain was the seal of their betrothal.

The lunch-bell rung, and first greeting Mr. Chetwynd and his wife, afterward shaking hands with Rex, De Laurian insisted upon escorting both girls to the breakfast parlor. Laughing and chatting, first to the dark-haired woman on his right, on whose finger he had placed the wedding-ring, and in whose ears he had spoken the sacred words, "my wife," then to the golden-haired girl, whose maiden heart had passed forever out of her keeping into his unworthy hands; in whose eyes still dawned the love-light awakened by his earnest protestations of abiding affection, Gervaise De Laurian went on, his heart beating high with wicked pleasure as he gloried in successful daring; as he thought of these two peerless women whose loves he had won, who acknowledged him their hearts' sovereign.

Lunch was comfortably over, when the Chetwynd carriage was driven up to the door.

Barbara and Blanche hastened to change their dresses for others more suitable, and it was when alone together that Barbara reproved Blanche for lack of confidence in her advice.

"But he seems so good, Barbara, and, after all, why should I not receive his attentions as well as you?"



"Beware, Gervaise De Laurian, how you accuse me of falsehoods! Remember who I am!"

Barbara did not tell her why, and a pang of pity for the girl shot through her heart.

"He does not flirt with me, Blanche. Besides—nothing. Will this dress do?"

She had abruptly changed the topic of conversation, and took from the wardrobe a maize-colored silk.

"I will wear it, at any rate, and my India shawl," she said, then thinking how her husband admired the dress and shawl.

"It is very becoming, Barbara," said Blanche. "I shall wear my white cashmere and scarlet wrap."

And Blanche inwardly remembered hearing her lover say she looked like a "sunset fairy" in that heavy, richly hanging dress, with the vivid glowing of the scarlet to relieve it.

Both dressing for the one they loved best; each striving to appear perfect in his eyes; and he, pacing the piazza, with a fragrant cigar between his lips, planning his afternoon's work.

First, he would acquaint Mr. Chetwynd with his engagement to Blanche.

He found the gentleman in the library; a few words of courteous interchange, and then he made known his errand.

"I have come to deliberately rob you of your choicest treasure—if, indeed, I have not already taken it. I love Blanche, Mr. Chetwynd, and have told her so. She returns that love. May I have her?"

A sudden graveness overspread the gentleman's face.

"Are you aware of the fate that hangs over her head? The Curse of Chetwynd Chase has been gathering for years to break on my innocent Blanche's head?"

De Laurian was impressed by the solemnity of Mr. Chetwynd's manner.

"I have heard of it, but I do not hesitate to say I can shield her from every harm. Whose arm is stronger than a husband's, or whose heart stouter? I want her, and despite the Curse she shall be mine if you give her to me."

"You must give me time for an answer. You tell me you are sure you love my child? I have often found myself wondering about it, half concluding, at times, that you did; then your attentions to Barbara Lester would become so marked, I decided you were trying to win her."

"That is true, Mr. Chetwynd; but, remember, I have been placed between two as lovely women as the sun shone on, and who, think you, could have acted differently? I have been analyzing my feelings, and have learned it is Blanche Chetwynd I love."

Very proud, imperious and strong he looked, standing there, in the full flush of a perfect manhood, pleading his suit with a noble fervor that became a better man; and courteously Mr. Chetwynd, who had seen handsome men before, noticed the kindling of his violet eyes, the proud curving of his lips, under the heavy amber mustache, and did not wonder that Blanche loved him.

Then he extended his hand cordially.

"Mr. De Laurian, I tell you frankly, I would rather you would have my daughter than any man I know. Will you brave this Curse for her sweet sake? will you take her with her dower of inherited vengeance? love her amid whatever misery may arise, cherish her through any gulfs of trouble, even if you are sacrificed in trying to save her? I say, 'trying,' because she can not be saved from Lady Constanza's Curse; it can not be averted by human hand, and they say fate will lead the youngest daughter of the house of Chetwynd to work out her own anguish with her own hands. I do not pretend to unravel this mystery, I only believe it as I believe I am a living, breathing man. I say, you will do so to her as you will call on your Maker to do to you?"

De Laurian bowed his handsome head in reverent assent.

"I swear it, Mr. Chetwynd; and the Curse that lights on my darling's head shall first break its weight on mine."

"Then I greet you my son, Gervaise, my boy!"

He grasped De Laurian's hand, and they exchanged a warm friendly greeting.

And the while, Blanche and Barbara, up in their room, were wondering at the low current of conversation that came floating indistinctly to their ears, and then Mr. Chetwynd's voice, clear and ringing, sounded in the hall below.

"Blanche! will you step down a moment?"

CHAPTER VI.

LOVE'S HIDE AND SEEK.

SHE turned almost abruptly away from Barbara, in whose hair she was twining a spray of dwarf pink flowers, and hastened down the stairs, leaving Barbara alone at the mirror, wondering if Gervaise would find any opportunity for a kiss or a caress, or a whispered love word.

Little recked she of the scene transpiring below, as Mr. Chetwynd closed the library door after Blanche.

At a glance, Blanche comprehended the situation, and her heart beat rapidly as her father led her up to De Laurian.

"My daughter, this gentleman has asked for you in marriage. He loves you; you love him. I give you, my only daughter, my youngest born daughter, with the awful inherited Curse of Chetwynd Chase on your girlish head, to Gervaise De Laurian to be his wife, through good and ill, bliss and misery, for life, death and eternity."

He laid her hand in De Laurian's; her pure hand, in one so false.

With unshed tears lying on her lashes, Mrs. Chetwynd, who had been a silent witness, touched Blanche's forehead with her lips, then kissed Gervaise.

"Remember, my children, this must be sacredly confidential. I have but the one request to make, which I am sure will be granted. I would request the engagement retained perfectly secret for several months, until Blanche has attained her twentieth birthday. Mr. Chetwynd remembers this to be the custom of our family, if any are betrothed before that age. Then we will announce it with all *clat*. Even from Bar-

bara, my dear, I wish you to keep the news. May I depend on you to gratify me in this one respect?"

Mrs. Chetwynd smiled as she spoke, as if she thought it would be a very serious thing for Blanche to withhold her all-important secret from Barbara, with whom she was naturally so very intimate.

De Laurian's heart was fairly throbbing with excessive exultation. What could have been better than that Mrs. Chetwynd herself should have suggested the secrecy from Barbara? He smiled at Blanche, who gladly agreed to keep their vows from Barbara's knowledge till the following June, when, on her twentieth birthday, both engagement and speedy wedding would be announced.

Then she went slowly up the stairs, her hands clasped over her heart; to still, if possible, its mad throbs of joy, fearful lest her telltale face should reveal to Barbara the sweet secret.

Stopping at the wardrobe, she selected a jaunty turban with a red cock's feather; then went on to Barbara.

"Are you ready, Blanche? I am, and waiting. Here's your wrap. Is Mr. De Laurian waiting?"

Blanche took the garment, with a low "thank you," and the two descended to the piazza where De Laurian awaited them.

"Bring them back by dinner-time, Mr. De Laurian."

He promised Mrs. Chetwynd, and the carriage rolled rapidly along the wide, graveled drive, and out upon the main road.

It was a charming afternoon; and, the turnpike once gained, De Laurian relaxed the strict reins on the horses, and leaned against the cushions of the carriage.

"Is not the scenery fine in this delicious autumn haze?"

It was Barbara's voice that broke the silence that had intervened since they had left Chetwynd Chase.

"Perfectly; and a most fitting time and place for me to entertain my lady guests."

"As if we couldn't entertain ourselves, Sir Conceit!"

Blanche laughed, and Barbara relaxed into a smile.

"Doubtless you could, although, you will admit, the subject of edification would be gossip or fashion."

"Or a more congenial subject, perhaps—love."

Barbara spoke in a low, intense voice, glancing at Gervaise.

His eyes sent back an answering light, and Blanche, fearful lest her incarnadine cheeks should reveal her thoughts, looked industriously through the window.

"It does seem strange that love is the only topic ever handled by poet, artist, or author; that is love and its modifications, which are envy, jealousy or revenge. So far as I am concerned, though I am neither painter, poet or romancer, I know love to be a most delightful experience."

Blanche's veil tumbled softly down over her

face, and under its filmy folds Gervaise detected the brightness of her eyes that she could not hide.

"Then you have loved, Mr. De Laurian?"

Barbara thought how strangely the question sounded as it left her lips, and a smile of amusement was in her eyes as she thought how she and Gervaise must converse thus, under the semblance of indifference.

Blanche would not mistrust how direct the application was of such commonplace remarks while through them she and De Laurian conveyed their love.

"Have I loved, you asked, Miss Barbara? I have; I do, most earnestly, most devotedly, I love with a fervor that never can be quenched till my heart is chilled by death."

His eyes were flooded with that dangerous siren light that made those two women's hearts throb so wildly.

"How is it with you? You have questioned me, now let me elicit an answer from you."

"Well," returned Barbara, her voice coming low and thrilling, "I love one who returns my affection as warmly as I can ask. I love him as no one else could. I will be true to the death."

She was nervously toying with the lace cover of her parasol, her eyes cast down, the long lashes veiling their light, and Gervaise De Laurian was watching her passionate face, triumphing that all that beauty was *his*.

"But, supposing he were false, Barbara?"

Gervaise spoke almost before he thought, and the flashing black eyes were raised in a second.

"I would not believe him false. He is not, I know, but admitting the fact that he *dare* be—ah, I can not express what he would receive at my hands."

Gervaise laughed.

"No one could be false to you, Miss Barbara. No one would. Depend upon this one whom you love, and trust him even as you say you do. He were less than man did he not worship you."

A gleam of exquisite joy darted from her eyes as he spoke.

Turning to Blanche, who had listened to it all, he laughingly challenged her.

"Come, Miss Blanche, tell us if you are acquainted with this rosy god?"

"You are too personal. I am almost afraid to confess."

"Then there is a confession? To reassure you, Miss Blanche, I am very confident there must be, somewhere on this wide hemisphere, some one who loves you truly, lastingly."

The scarlet flowed in a quick tide to her face, and she averted her head, withal so thankful for the delicate avowal he had made; but she strove to laugh it off.

"You must be a wizard, Mr. De Laurian."

"There, that reminds me. Why need we three insist on calling each other by such foolishly formal titles? I am sure we all are each other's best friend, and I propose from this moment we be 'Barbara,' 'Blanche' and 'Gervaise' to each other."

The girls were only too delighted. Blanche, that she dared address him so; Barbara, that his strategy was so admirable, for her heart yearned to call his loved name again.

Meanwhile, engrossed in pleasant conversation, they had traversed the distance between Chetwynd Chase and Passaic Falls, and, as they slowly drove through the shady avenues, De Laurian still contrived that all his remarks should appear personal to both, yet not arouse suspicion in either.

"That reminds me, Barbara, of your vengeance you spoke of an hour ago. See that fissure just to the right of us, that extends the whole length of the rock? I can imagine you thrusting your unloyal lover down there, with your star eyes above him, the last light the world should hold for him."

Blanche shivered.

"Gervaise, don't talk so." And Barbara laughed. "I might do more than that."

Gervaise laughed it off. He was so brilliant, so fascinating, and Barbara's eyes grew darkly tender as they rode home in the gathering gloom, while his hand clasped hers under the protecting shawl, and he stooped, now and then, under pretext of arranging the afghan, to whisper, in such a heart-stirring tone, "My beautiful wife!"

Silently happy she nestled beside him, caring for naught; knowing his presence was her very life; his love, that glanced in his eyes, her more than life.

On the other side, her scarlet wrap clinging closely around her white, pure face, her sun-bright hair streaming in the brisk west wind, Blanche was quietly sitting, with De Laurian's arm around her shoulder, dreaming over the way he had murmured "my own," so many times that blissful afternoon.

So they rode homeward, with the round, yellow harvest moon slowly coming up from behind a low-lying bank of clouds; with the soothing music of the Passaic coming to their ears. These two women, each blessing Gervaise De Laurian for the love that he had given her; each thankful that in the fullness of that love, he made them so perpetually conscious of it, and yet preserved it a hidden treasure from the other.

And Gervaise De Laurian himself, so handsome and defiant, with a smile on his lip, that in its beauty and purity belied the laugh of horrible triumph in his heart, rode home between these two women, whose happiness he was deliberately crushing, whose lives he was forever blasting.

Well was it for him that the golden light of the harvest moon did not lighten his purposes as it did his faultless face; as it had frozen the smile of serene happiness on the lip of his unconscious victims as he lifted them carefully from the carriage, with a caress for both, as they ascended the steps of the piazza.

Little did he dream that the Curse of Chetwynd Chase would culminate through his wickedness, and that his own was the hand that would pour the vials of wrath on another head than his own.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SHADOW ON THE PATH.

"We've company for you, Barbara, Blanche. It's fortunate you've returned in such good season, especially you, Barbara, for your old friend and admirer is extremely anxious to see you."

"To see me? Who can it be? I have no such devoted cavalier."

Her glance wandered involuntarily to De Laurian, who with the light in his eyes she had learned to dread, was regarding her intently.

"Who can it be, now, I wonder?" retorted Mrs. Chetwynd, laughingly. "Sure enough, who is the gentleman whose letters lie in a certain casket in Miss Barbara Lester's room, all tied with blue?"

A sudden conscious flushing of her cheeks, more than Mrs. Chetwynd's words, aroused a demon in Gervaise De Laurian's breast, that required more excruciating than could easily be exerted.

Blanche, for the moment, wondered why her lover looked so darkly; then she dismissed the thought with a chiding to her own heart for judgment against him. A brief second Gervaise had looked sternly at Barbara; then with a gesture she rightly interpreted as jealousy, he turned to Blanche, all smiles and attention. Mrs. Chetwynd's voice broke the oppressively awkward silence.

"You do not seem desirous of welcoming him, so I will myself summon him from the parlor. Mr. Davenal!"

Like lightning De Laurian turned around, and though Barbara's face was purposely averted, she felt the glances of rage he cast on her, as, in answer to the summons, light, quick footsteps approached.

The door opened and Roy Davenal entered the library. With a bow to the party, he went straight up to Barbara, who, with wildly throbbing heart, as she tried to imagine the effect of this meeting on her husband, awaited his coming.

"Barbara, Lester! I am so delighted to see you again; and Blanche, how do you find you?" He extended a hand to each, but after cordially clasping her fragile fingers, let her remove them, while he retained Barbara's, and closed the remaining hand over her palm.

His admiration was too sincere for coquetry, and as with elaborate politeness Gervaise De Laurian acknowledged the introduction, he decided that Roy Davenal was in love with his wife.

He surveyed his rival from head to foot; and as he acknowledged what a fine-looking man this Roy Davenal was, he also concluded to flank him.

It was a serious business this double affair of his; and if he possessed unlimited boldness to attempt to carry it through, he also possessed an unmeasurable amount of jealousy that enabled him to prevent Roy Davenal from courting his wife, or paying attention to Blanche Chetwynd, even while he must attend to both himself *sub rosa*, but, as to think was to act with Gervaise De Laurian, so, while he critically disposed of handsome Roy Davenal, so did he decide upon the course he himself would pursue.

First, he was going to let Roy Davenal suppose he was in love with Blanche Chetwynd, which, of course, was partly true, but of which Barbara had not the vaguest suspicion. This plan, while it left him free to keep good his protestations to Blanche, would serve to remind Barbara of the promise they had mutually made, viz., that if she ever flirted with Roy Davenal, he should not hesitate to do the same with Blanche Chetwynd. He never for a moment supposed Barbara was playing a game as deep as his own; he only supposed that Davenal was in love with her, and that there was nothing between them. In this he was vastly mistaken, as he learned afterward. His mind made up thus far, he dismissed all thoughts of after-results, and began his part in the tragedy that darkened that hour, by turning to Blanche with a smile that set her heart a-flutter.

"Blanche, if you are not fatigued, suppose we take a promenade?" Mrs. Chetwynd, may she go? I assure you I will take excellent care of her."

Barbara turned at the words, and was in time to see him place the scarlet wrap over her shoulders, and clasp the silver fastening.

He drew her hand through his arm, and with a glance as swift as meaning at Barbara, passed out the open French window.

"Shall we follow, Barbara? I have so much to say."

Roy Davenal bent low over her crimson cheeks.

Only an instant did she hesitate, as she thought:

"I will be equal with Gervaise De Laurian. He shall see I can flirt as well as he can."

Then, with a bewitching smile, she answered Davenal, loud enough to be also heard by Gervaise and Blanche; and her husband ground his heel on the gravelled path as the musical sound reached him.

"Thank you, Roy; I will go. I know nothing I should prefer to a moonlight walk with you alone."

And Roy Davenal, in the fullness of his love, believed what she said!

"And now, my own, tell me every thing that has happened since we parted, in the spring. Have you been well? and happy, and true?"

They had gone only a little way from the river bank, and it seemed to the girl who leaned so heavily on his arm that his voice was lower, and more intense, than ever she had heard it; and a shiver thrilled her, but she unhesitatingly answered him.

"Well, and happy, and true, Roy."

How she abhorred herself for that deliberate lie! but there, in the moonlight, before them walked the two who were goading her on to it.

"I need not have asked it, for my heart is the judge of yours, yet I am so happy to find you are my very own, after all."

"After all?" Roy, what do you mean?"

Her heart beat quicker for the moment, and yet she knew her secret was her own.

"That gentleman I met—that Mr. De Laurian—has a reputation that has reached all the way to my Western home. Blanche's lover, I see now."

"Well?"

Barbara answered calmly, but her eyes glittered with a light that told how strongly her heart resented whatever reflection Roy might cast upon her husband.

"I heard he was a frequent inmate of Mr. Chetwynd's mansion, and knowing how beautifully bewitching you were, my Barbara, how could I help wondering if he would win you over to him?"

"You forgot Blanche, Roy. You see for yourself his devotion. Besides, how could I play you false?"

Why did she not tell him, then and there? Why did her voice, fraught with such liquid tenderness, lead her deeper into anguish at the last, and him further from happiness?

"You could not, I know, and that I have wronged you by the suspicion, let me beg your pardon. Still, you can hardly ensure me when you know it was love that prompted the fond jealousy. To lose you, my Barbara, would be worse than death."

He wound his arms around her waist, and kissed her mouth; while, just in advance of them, she saw Blanche clinging to her husband's arm, and his haughty head bowed in tender solicitation. Her innate womanliness cried out against this double outrage, but a lurking devil in her heart prompted her to deal as she was dealt by; not thinking it was Gervaise De Laurian she was outmaneuvering, foul-hearted though he was, but her own self, this guileless Blanche, her noble lover, who, had he known what she could have told him, would have fled from her as from a plague-tainted creature.

But to Roy Davenal, Barbara Lester was the embodiment of all that was good, pure and womanly; and, in the night of his love, he had invested her with the qualifications of a goddess. That tableau before her—and little recked she that all was truth that she thought a bit of clever, pointed acting—galled her, and with a firm resolution to banish the admonitions of conscience while she detected no signs of a discontinuance on her husband's part of this wretched farce, she turned around toward Roy; a sigh, that she could not repress, escaping her lips.

"Did I hear aright? Barbara, you are not wounded at what I said?"

"I am not. I happened to recall a memory of the past that gave me a momentary heart pang. That is all."

"Barbara, do you know I can truthfully say I do not regret any of my part that concerns you? By the by, dearest, I came across the most charming ballad the other day that so fully coincides with my feelings. Shall I sing it?"

"If you will, yes."

Barbara was gazing at the pair before them, and she spoke in feverish haste.

"Mr. De Laurian and Blanche will doubtless be a delighted audience," responded Roy, gayly. "But I am perfectly willing they shall consider the language personal."

His clear tenor notes, mellow and musical, sounded out on the still autumn night; and, as Barbara clung to his arm, wondering what her husband would think, and smiling bitterly as she thought how much more guilty she was than he, De Laurian and Blanche involuntarily slackened their steps to listen.

"Oh, Gervaise, my early love,
The years but make thee dearer far,
My heart shall never, never rove
From thee, my bright, my guiding star!
For me the past brings no regret;
What'er the years may bring to me,
I bless the hour when first we met,
The hour that gave thy love to me."

In a flood of exquisite, pensive melody the words died softly away.

"Gervaise, is not that lovely?"

Blanche Chetwynd, her eyes wet with unshed tears, looked up in her lover's face.

"Perfect. So touching, and expressive of my feelings to you, my own."

"As if I did not know that! And while I am so happy in your love, Gervaise, I rejoice that Barbara's heart is so fully Roy's. They have been engaged these three years."

"Engaged?"

He started involuntarily, his eyes lighting up with a dangerous glow.

"Why, yes. Did you not know? They will be married in the early spring."

"Married! Barbara Lester married in the spring?"

He repeated the words in a low, hoarse tone, that made Blanche look at him in extreme surprise.

"Why, Gervaise, what of that?"

Her words recalled him to the actualities of the present, while they warned him of his part to play.

"Nothing, Blanche, dear. Only it seems so odd, somehow, to associate Barbara and marriage. I should as soon have thought of hearing of your marriage with—well with—"

"Some odd married man?"

And Blanche laughingly supplied the most ridiculous comparison she could think of.

"For a second his cheek burned, and his dark eyes steadily studied her sweet, guileless face."

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 158.)

The False Widow:

OR,
FLORIAN REDESDALE'S FORTUNE.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "ADRIA, THE ADOPTED," "CECIL'S DECEIT," "TRANGELY WEB," "MADAME DURAND'S PRODIGES," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A SUDDEN VOYAGE.

FLORIAN, in her room above, had permitted herself to be disrobed, and lay down in her little white-draped French bed, thinking herself too blissfully happy to close her eyes in sleep. But soon she lost herself in delightful fancies, and from that she lapsed into the deep sweet slumber of youth and health.

And Mrs. Redesdale below never went to bed at all.

It seemed that all the proprieties were to be outraged in the breaking dawn of that May morning. When that long consultation with her son was over, Mrs. Redesdale summoned the sleepy footman, who had passed the night in a hall-chair, who was waiting there still to give egress to the young man, and dispatched a hastily scribbled note to Colonel Marquestone.

That gentleman had been one of the last to quit the scene of the masked ball, and was just settling himself comfortably into his first nap, when, after considerable difficulty, he was aroused, and the message delivered to him.

"What the—saints has come about now?" he grumbled. "Of all inexplicable, incomprehensible mysteries, a woman is the worst."

He dressed himself at once, however, and went his way to grant his fiancée the immediate interview she asked. What the object of that interview was, the course of closely succeeding events will show. A little ornamental clock was striking eight as she entered her room, and the sun was well up in the sky. There was no maid in waiting, for Mrs. Redesdale was fully equal to the management of her ordinary toilettes, and she did not care to have sharp eyes invade her privacy. Adele, who was Florian's maid, was at her command whenever she wished her services. Now she set about the task of removing her ball costume quite unaided, and replaced the sweeping velvet robe with a morning wrapper of some neutral tint, but faced up the front with crimson silk. For, at last, she had thrown aside the distasteful blacks she had worn so long, and was blossoming out in the vivid tints which became her so well.

She sat in her chair before the window, open to admit the fresh morning air, her thoughts going back to con over the occurrences of the night. Marquestone, impatient and inclined to be jealous, insisting on the immediate fulfillment of the vows she had made first and broken four and twenty years ago; Alec Kenyon rising as it were from the dead, and demanding at her hands his daughter, whom she had driven to self-destruction—that tale the sea would never return, but she was sure of it as if she had seen the pitiless waters close over the bright young head; Louis, bereft of the gentle influence which would have turned his best impulses to nobler and better aims, schemes himself, reckless and resolute, to the lending which involved her so deeply; the two happy lovers,

Aubrey and Florian, to be separated, estranged, their bright hopes sacrificed to the ambition she was rearing—surely enough to engross her in the contemplation.

"My impetuous colonel," she thought, "What a pity such fidelity as his must be disappointed. For the third time, too, but yet a little longer he shall enjoy the blissful delusion. It really distresses me to contemplate the blank of despair to which he may be consigned, but bigamy is an ugly word, and an uglier fact when a man like Alec Kenyon stands in the way, and yet—and yet I don't suppose any money would induce him to take me back to his faithful breast again. These scruples of conscience, what martyrs they make of us. How he did care for me once, too, that he could so soon forget the baby-faced first wife, and he imagined I would forgive his artifice and receive the pining infant because it was *his* child. I thought I had revenged myself to the full when I put it out of his power to see or know her, and now how the father's heart yearns for the wife, which must be restored to him. Blue eyes and yellow hair, and he will never know she is not of his flesh and blood. It is not a hard task—that much of it."

"The trouble—the only great trouble will be with the willful girl above stairs. But she must submit, and then—well, surely, her bridegroom's mother will be sacred as her father's wife. There will be no exposure, no scandal. I shall have half the fortune she brings her liege lord, and I shall slip gracefully out of the circle, to return or not as shall thereafter be decided. That poor colonel again! It will come like a cruel blow upon him, I'm afraid. I think I really should prefer being out of the reach of his wrath, but I can face the music and hear it out—as witness last night."

Though the night had been a trying one, though there had been a strain on her mind and nerves, though she had neither slept nor rested, she swept into the breakfast-room with her undisturbed dignity, even more brilliant, fresh and gracious than her common wont.

She was first there, but Florian came down a few minutes later, in a dressing-robe of blue cashmere with dainty white frills, a little subdued, with a dreamy light in her hazel eyes and a tremulous smile touching her lips—more charming for this pensive shade which perfect happiness threw about her.

"Late for once, my dear," was Mrs. Redesdale's salutation as she took her place behind the coffee urn. "Late hours and much dancing will tell in time on even such fresh vitality as yours. I was right in planning a change from the continuous round. I have made arrangements for a tour to the coast, Florian. I am feeling the need of rejuvenation before we undertake the watering places, where we shall find just the same gay whirl we have had here. And you will be all the better for a little rest."

"We can have that here, can we not?" The *bal masque* was the last grand affair of the season, you know."

"Yes; but there are still matinees and operas, soirees and dinner parties, and little informal gatherings, that are twice as wearisome and not half so amusing. I hoped you would be anxious as I am to escape them."

"As you like, of course, mamma. I should like to see dear old Beachcliff again, and aunt Deb's letter of invitation the other day was urgent coming from her. I'm afraid I've been feeling hardly toward her all this time—she treated me badly in regard to papa, you know—but now I'm going to turn a new leaf and forgive even those who have despitely used me, and aunt Deb never did that. I think she was conscientious in believing she did all for the best."

Mrs. Redesdale knew what she meant—that no unpleasantness, however slight, should mar the new world of love she was entering. The Lessinghams are going down next week," Florian continued. "Mrs. Lessingham's physician has ordered the change. It would be pleasant to go all together."

"But I have our arrangements quite made, my dear. It's rather sudden, but we are to go to-morrow, and in a party quite as pleasant as that would be. I have accepted an invitation from Colonel Marquestone, and we are to go on board his yacht to-morrow. So much more delightful to go by water than by rail, and our young artist—you are rather partial to him, I think—is to make one of the party. Let Adele pack what you will need, and we will have the luggage sent aboard this evening."

This was an arrangement which did not please Florian at all.

"That Colonel Marquestone, mamma! Do you know that people are beginning to link his name and yours? I wish you would give up the plan."

"How unreasonable, my dear. After I have promised and made calculations for the trip, and meant it is a pleasant surprise for you. I have enjoyed it in anticipation, not dreaming that you could turn whimsical enough to disappoint me."

Florian felt a little resentful at that injured tone, but in her new-found happiness was too anxious to be at peace with all the world not to concede the point.

"My whim shall not disappoint you, then, but I thought you wouldn't wish to give encouragement to those rumors. And I should rather be independent of any favor from that colonel."

"That colonel! You seem foolishly opposed to him, Florian. I find him quite an agreeable companion, and I am sure he will consider the favor all evinced toward him. I shall order the carriage for the afternoon, and we will drive round to leave last directions regarding our summer outing. Excuse me, please, my dear."

She rose from the table, anxious to escape any further remonstrances or questioning now that the point was gained.

"Can it be that there is truth in those remarks?" mused Florian. "It almost seems so, sometimes. But she did appear to mourn papa sincerely. Poor papa!" And that sigh was not entirely in sorrowful remembrance of his fate. It seemed as much a mingling of pity for his blindness, and thanksgiving that he had escaped the knowledge of it. For Florian read her steps, and cold, hard nature averted, without suspecting that the stoic she had formed or the means she was capable of employing to gain their end.

It was just like a man—such a generous, trusting man as her father had been—to fall down and worship the beautiful outward semblance, not questioning that the soul was quite as lovely. That first impression of hers, formed from the letters of the two—those loving letters her father had written her from year to year, and which had never reached her until after his death, and the one from his widowed bride announcing that fact and her own intentions—the thought that had occurred then, that he was spared being sorely disappointed in, that woman he had married, never faded or died out. She had retracted the hasty judgment which attributed only selfish and mercenary motives to the wife; her apparent grief and strict seclusion for the first year and more, her declaration that she sought society again simply because her duty to his daughter demanded it, gained her unhesitating credence.

And she was dutiful, as she felt her father would have wished had he lived—no hard task where she was left apparently to the bent of her own will—but there was neither sympathy nor affection between the two. They dwelt together under the same roof and ate at the same table, but their inner lives were as far apart as though whole seas rolled between them.

The day was a busy one, yet it seemed long until the evening. Aubrey would come then. He had asked permission at parting on the previous night—permission readily granted.

Dinner was over, and she sat quite alone in the library until the summons should come for her. There was a little table with the latest magazines at her elbow, and there was a volume of Tennyson in red-and-gold lying unopened on her lap. She was dreaming an idyl—realizing a delicious poem whose title was Love.

The moments stole on and on, the evening was passing, and yet he did not come.

Colonel Marquestone had been there and gone again after a short interview with her stepmother. The bell tinkled now and then, each time starting the hot blood throbbing in her veins as she waited expectantly, but no message was brought to her.

It grew late as she sat there still, her happy dreams changed to vague uneasiness and disappointment. She heard the rustle of Mrs. Redesdale's dress as she passed on her way up the broad staircase, and then she heard Thomas going his rounds closing the house and putting out the lights. She went up to her own room then wearily, not suspecting that Aubrey had been there and asked for her, but received the well-worn, stereotyped phrase in answer—"Not at home!"

He had gone away a little puzzled, but concluding that some sudden emergency had called her away.

And Florian pleaded to herself a like excuse for her lover's failure in keeping the appointment he himself had made, and wondering that he had not sent some message or excuse, floated away to the realms of dreamland. And even in her visions the disappointment followed her.

She dreamed that he was coming toward her, looking as he had looked while they walked back and forth beneath the moon and he told her of his love. But when he was almost at her side, she glanced down and saw that a gulf was opening between them. He stretched out his arms to her, but the space between them widened, she felt herself carried away, away—the murmur of waters was in her ears and the earth rocked under her feet.

She was awakened by her maid just as the dawn began to break. A hasty repast was served by gaslight in the breakfast-room, and the carriage was at the door before the heavy fog which hung low over the city began to break away before the rising sun.

She wrote a hasty note at the last moment, explaining their hasty journey and giving their destination, leaving it with Adele to deliver to Aubrey should he call during the day. She was confident that he would call, as he did early that afternoon, at which time the tiny missive was given him.

Colonel Marquestone and the young artist had passed the night aboard the yacht. They were all ready for departure soon as the ladies came on.

They had a delicious little breakfast served in the cabin after they were fairly on their way, and, contrary to Florian's expectation, the day wore on in a most pleasant manner.

The salt breeze was like a stimulant, sunshine flooded the air with golden radiance, the water dimpled and glanced beneath it, and broke in a sweep of broad ripples in their wake.

"What time do we reach Beachcliff?" asked Florian, with a glance at the sun, which had passed the meridian. "I should think we were almost there with such a steady breeze blowing."

"Beachcliff? We have passed there, have we not, colonel? Yes, so I thought. Is it possible I neglected to mention, my dear, that Beachcliff is not our destination? We are going to a picturesque point further down the coast where I passed a week or two delightfully last summer. The surroundings are rude, but with an air of romantic interest attaching to the spot."

"Not going to Beachcliff! Mamma, have you been purposely misleading me? You know that was my understanding. Why should you seek to deceive me?"

"I declare, it is quite incomprehensible to me how you retained that impression. I have a flying visit to the place dotted down on our return route, but it didn't strike me you supposed that was to be our headquarters."

The matter rested there, but Florian was dissatisfied, suspicious. She could not accept the explanation so lamely given. She had been deceived—purposely deceived regarding their destination. Even now she observed it was not given to her fairly. What purpose could they have in withholding it? Why had she been hurried into this abrupt voyage at all? They were questions she could not answer, and they kept recurring with uncomfortable force as the sun dropped lower and lower, and the little yacht sped on over the dancing waters.

"Don't you agree with me now, Florian? Is not this a wildly picturesque spot? I venture to say there is no such scenery in your little village of the prettily fanciful name—Beachcliff!"

Florian glanced about her with a little feminine air.

"Wild enough, picturesque enough, but a fearfully desolate, awe-inspiring place. I had no idea that the Jersey shore, with its mild bluffs and monotonous sand-stretches, was any where so boldly diversified."

The sun was dipping down into the sea, reflecting the red glow of its setting over ocean and sky and land. It was a wild, desolate place as she said. Huge black cliffs rose up on either hand beetling out over the sea, a strip of pebbled beach stretched back to a broken shore which lost itself in the gloom already settling down. At a little distance the yacht floated idly at anchor, and the tiny car-boat in which they had landed was crowded on the beach.

"Not an honest-looking place," Florian said. And she thought, "A place for crimes to be committed, for evil deeds done in darkness to leave no outward trace."

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Mrs. Redesdale, observant of the quivering, waiting tone. "No quarter now, and the battle is gained."

She said: "I am really inclined to tell you why I throw my influence in his favor, if only to exonerate myself in your eyes. I am really very anxious to retain your good opinion, Florian. Of course I loved your father, and I've exercised a mother's solicitude over you for his sake. If he were alive, he would approve my course in this as every thing else. Did it never strike you that Louis and I resemble each other? You perceive the fact now, at least. It is only natural I should side with my own blood, and Louis is my own son. You are astonished, of course. You did not know that I was a widow when your father met me, and, indeed, candor compels me to state, neither did he. Now, my dear, you have my reason for aiding him."

"Papa thought you were an angel, and you deceived him like that!" cried Florian, indignantly. "You betrayed him as you would betray me now—but you shall not. Go and leave me if you choose. I have friends who will not forsake me—friends who will find me, even in this hiding-place of guilty, outcast men, whose illicit business is sure to betray them some day. You shall not force me into this marriage, if I have to wait until that time comes for rescue."

"The sweet confidence of innocence!" sneered Mrs. Redesdale. "But it's a truth, nevertheless, that might rules instead of right nowadays. Judge for yourself how much hope you may have to evade me by either of these means. This very band of smugglers have been playing their trade—disturbed now and then, and moving from place to place, I admit, but never broken up or turned from it—for twenty odd years. They are not meaning to move from here very soon, my dear, and unless some one in whom you have confidence will give bond that you will not betray them, they would keep you secure enough, if only to insure their own safety, without other inducement which may be offered them. And your friends shall have satisfactory explanation of your absence. In two days all New York shall be ringing with news of your elopement with the promising young artist. Even young Mr. Lessingham will not be proof against that story, I think."

"Mamma, you would never be so wicked—so cruel."

Florian crouched shivering before the bright blaze of the fire, turning her colorless face with wild, wide eyes to meet the other's pitiless glance—a glance which changed to one penetrating and anxious.

"What is the matter with you, girl? I believe—Give me your hands, Florian."

They were like ice. Her lips were faintly purple, lines in her face—pallid, and with a sallowness not natural to her fair skin. Mrs. Redesdale dropped her hands and walked out of the room, returning after a moment with the deaf old woman who kept the house in order. The latter gave one long look into the girl's face, and turned nodding to her stepmother.

"Yes'm, you're right. Pever'n-ager, if ever I saw it. Laws, 'taint nothin' when you're used to it. Chills—umph!—wuss'n if she'd shak'te outright. Better go to bed and have yarb-take to break it."

Red spots were coming into Florian's cheeks already, and a flash of fever heat alternated the chills which had seemed to freeze the blood in her veins.

"Chill fever. You must lie down for a while, my dear. It is intermittent, and you will probably find yourself able to be up again before night. The locality is rather favorable to this sort of disease, and there's nothing like it to break an obstinate will. I think it's a providential interposition in our behalf. Quite ruinous to beauty, though, my dear, and you couldn't rid yourself of it through the season here."

Suffering and miserable, Florian was glad to seek her bed—a contrast to the dainty little French affair at home, and for a time the racking pains which came with the fever effectually banished the subject of her mental trials. Mrs. Redesdale watched beside her until she sunk from half-delirium into a torpid sleep, and then went out to find Louis pacing the corridor.

"What is it? Is she really ill? She looked like a ghost down there on the beach this morning."

"Really ill, but only with Jersey chills. Not pleasant for her, but lucky for us, I imagine. It is that which has been making her submissive, and she won't have the strength or will to resist us after this. Prepare yourself, and bring along the clergyman; you will find your interesting bride ready for you this very night."

Only Jersey chills! Not so romantic as a breaking heart, but much more effectual in prostrating and enervating system and mind. Nothing less matter-of-fact would have conquered Florian's will and determination of resistance. As it was, she crept weak and trembling out of bed when her stepmother roused her toward evening, permitting herself to be dressed and led back to the little sitting-room which had been devoted almost exclusively to the ladies' use. She lay back in a large wooden rocker before the fire still blazing on the hearth, for this day, notwithstanding the season was early in June, was chilly as November; lay there with closed eyes, too weary and inert even to think what might be expected of her.

Louis had been clambering over the rocks, making some sketches, during the afternoon, and coming in toward sunset threw himself down upon a bench and went fast asleep. The dim old house was a long, rambling affair, with various entrances and some dozen rooms in all, low-ceiled and void of furnishing, but less comfortable than the outside promised.

Colonel Marquestone was sauntering down upon the beach, enjoying his cigar and some complacent reflections. Mrs. Redesdale had been with him but went back to the house when a fog began to rise out of the sea. She had no intention of inviting Jersey chills by undue exposure. He was a little startled presently to behold a girlish figure come out from the shadow of the cliffs and take the path which led to the house. His first thought had been that it was Florian, but as she drew nearer he saw that the figure was smaller, more fragile, and he had a momentary glimpse of a small, wan face and floating golden hair as she turned the angle taking her out of his sight again.

The boy Jack was loitering at a little distance, and to him the colonel turned.

"Who was that? Where in thunder did she spring from—or is the angel blest with wings to wait herself through airy space?"

"Reckon she came through the tunnel," answered Jack, stolidly. "That's Beauty, old Grimm's pet."

"The tunnel! Oh, that has been cut through from the cave since I was here last. Where did Grimm get hold of such a girl, and what's she doing here?"

Jack half-closed his sharp eyes and squinted speculatively at his questioner.

"Can't peach on one of the b'boys even for you, cunnel," he responded, promptly.

"Quite right, my lad; keep a close tongue in your head—until you find it worth while loosening it. Now, for instance."

He took a piece of money from his vest pocket and held it up to Jack's sight.

"Oh, well then, jest to 'blige you, cunnel. Old Grimm fished her up out'n the sea last winter, or next thing to it. We'd been snowed up here, but there came a thaw, and he took a run over to town for store stuff gran'ny 'd been grumbling arter for a week. I was along that time. We made the run in a day and started back the same night, but lost tack through Grimm getting half-seas-over on shore. We went ahead the wrong way, and just as it come day run down a little craft without a sail or an oar, and flat in the bottom like dead that gal—Beauty, Grimm called her from the fast. She was nigh about froze, but he poured licker into her and wrapped her up in all the blankets we had aboard, and so got a little life stirred and goin'. She had a long turn arterward; he had her up to his place, and the doctor from twenty mile inland out every other day afore she come round. Old Grimm sets a store by her, but most because he can twist young Nat about his fingers anyhow at all—Nat Grimm's blowed about leavin' more'n once, but he knows he'd never get Beauty if he did, and he's turned spoozier'n green peas any day."

That flash of white face and yellow hair had impressed the colonel strangely.

"She is like some one I have seen," he thought. "Who?"

"Last winter," he said. "What time?"

"Fourth of January. Don't take so many trips but I make a note of 'em."

"And that is the time Mirette went down to the coast," the colonel mused. "What if it turns out to be the girl not dead after all? Someway I never believed that tale. If it is, and Louis stumbles across her, it might rather seriously affect the plans of my lady-love. I must see to it."

He turned toward the house, Jack shambling in his wake. The boy's tongue, effectually loosened, rambled on upon the same subject.

"She ain't often here, Beauty ain't," Grimm keeps her close, but once in a while when he wants Nat to make a bigger risk he brings her up to meet the boat. Keeps her fixed up like a queen, and has a room rigged in the East L. over there that none o' your lot has got a sight of. And she no more suspicious how all the things come than a baby would. She's under a cloud, gran'ny says, and don't notice much what goes on about her anyway. That's her light there."

A gleam shone out from a window in the opposite end of the building from that where Mrs. Redesdale and Florian together occupied an apartment.

The colonel drew silently near until he could look in beneath the fragment of a blind which shaded the window. There was a carpet on the floor, a couch heaped high with gaudy cushions, and a few chairs of the same rude make which furnished the rest of the house.

The old woman was upon her knees blowing a flickering blaze upon the hearth, and resting on the bright cushions of the couch was the girl he had seen. Slight, fair, childlike, with golden hair rippling about her shoulders, and big blue eyes fixed wistfully on the empty space before her.

"Beauty under a cloud," said the colonel, softly. "I'd wager a hundred that I saw its shadow first." Then he went back to the spot where Jack still was standing.

"It mightn't be convenient to have that little lady come upon my party, Jack. Here's a dollar to see that her door is locked for the night after your grandmother leaves her."

Jack nodded and chuckled.

"That's a dollar easy made," he mumbled, as the colonel moved away. "Beauty's safe enough; she's not able to come out when there's a chance of the men bein' round."

It was eleven and dark as Erebus, when a boat loaded to the water's edge and manned by a crew of a dozen or more grounded at the little beach. Planks were thrown out, and in a twinkling the spot which had been deserted a moment before was thronged by dusky, shadowy forms. Then lights flashed here and there, bundles and bales and casks began to be hurled out upon the beach, suppressed oaths and a busy buzz, when now and then a sharp command making itself heard, gave evidence that even here, in their most secret rendezvous, the smugglers were on their guard against betrayal or surprise.

The colonel pressed forward to speak a few words with the commander of the little crew.

"Where's Sprague?" he asked, as he was turning away. "Ah, I see. Here, parson, I have a little job for you to get over. You don't have many in the line nowadays."

"Not many. Splicing yourself, colonel?"

"No—a friend of mine. What sort of a run is this?"

"Heavy. Nearly too much so, as we had to show lively heels on the way. One of Uncle Sam's cruisers hanging off the bay; we ran square across her track before we knew it, and only the darkness saved us."

"Danger of them finding you out?"

"Not much—none, I fancy. They might run close under The Point at midday and never suspect. Had a cutter in these waters off and on for a week last fall, run in under her very nose and hadn't a trouble."

Louis came sauntering down the hall at their entrance, and Mrs. Redesdale made her appearance at almost the same moment. Both had been apprised of the arrival of the boat and were on the watch for the colonel and his companion.

"Come," said the lady. "Get it over quickly. I don't know what the girl means, she is too quiet, too indifferent. Can the man be trusted?"—this in a whisper to her faithful fiancé.

"To the utmost verge of villainy—yes!"

Florian sat still before the fire, opening her weary eyes wonderingly at their entrance. Mrs. Redesdale pressed forward to her side.

"Com, my dear. Such a romantic *elaissement* this afternoon! I am sure the lack of *travesti* and company. Come, Florian, the bridegroom waits the bride. What a pity you're not in white; but then you're not superstitious to attach an ill-omen to that 'hadden gray'."

Louis came forward, but she arose, drawing away from him, quiet, but with her lips set in that firm line, which left no doubt of her determination. Mrs. Redesdale fairly trembled before it. She had seemed so passive, so incapable of resistance, but she meant to balk them after all her obstinate will.

"There can not be a marriage without the consent of both parties," she said. "I never will consent—never if I die here."

Louis caught her hand roughly, turning her to face the other three. She was trembling, sinking with that dizzy weakness; he was strong, pitiless, cold as steel.

"Such marriages have been and may be again. Let the man proceed."

The Reverend Sprague took his place before them, quite unmoved by the little scene, and began to repeat the marriage ceremony unconcernedly, as if the consent of the bride were not a matter of any consequence.

Florian cast one wild, incredulous glance into the circle of cruel faces. "Would they go through this mockery of a marriage despite all she could do? Was there no help for her—no escape?"

The force of will which had sustained her was slipping away. She heard Louis give his responses. She tried to break away, but his arm about her was like a vise. The monotonous utterance of the smuggler minister paused; she

knew they awaited her reply. She tried to cry out again that she would never consent, but, with the effort, she seemed borne away into a darkness which closed over her with a sound like the rush of waters. And sustaining her dead weight in his arm, the words which pronounced them man and wife were uttered. The mockery of a marriage was over.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 149.)

Renie's Love Story.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"It seems easy enough, I'm sure. You've only to sit down with a pile of freshly-out paper, a good pen and a bottle of ink—pshaw! Gustie, where's the use of your saying story-writing is as hard work as sewing or sweeping?"

Renie Morrison was glancing over her friend's shoulders, her pretty red lips pouted, her bright brown eyes flashing under the quizzical frowns on her white brow.

Gustie Lambert laughed as she drew an unrolled sheet from the little pile.

"Honor bright, Renie, I'd rather go down in the kitchen and help Bridget stone the cherries for pies than feel under the obligation I do to have a certain amount of manuscript ready to go out by the five o'clock mail."

"Well, I wouldn't, then. And if you only knew, Gustie, my dear, how ridiculous it sounds, and how everybody laughs who hears you say it is any trouble to compose a sketch—like that one, for instance—you would not mention it again, I'm sure. Why, Gustie, I *know* I could do it, and so could anybody, for that matter, who had ever read a bit."

Miss Lambert smiled; a fair, stately girl she was, with serious, hazel eyes, and a statuesque face.

"I am glad that to some literary aspirants their labor is no trouble. Perhaps it is because their talents are far greater than mine."

Renie looked closely to see if Gustie were making fun; then she shook her bonny brown curls saucily.

"Well, I don't know any thing about the 'talent'-ed part of it, but I know anybody could write a story. You've only to go off by yourself, and think of something you've read and write it down. Honor bright, Gustie, ain't that the way?"

A merry smile was in Miss Lambert's eyes.

"I hardly think editors would appreciate such 'hash,' Renie. I fancy they prefer to do their own scissoring."

"What do you do, then? Think of a lady's name and a gentleman's name, and have them fall in love?"

"Like you and Frank Carlton, for instance?" Gustie's interpolation brought the pink to Renie's cheek.

"Now, Gustie! you know Frank Carlton don't care a fig for me, nor—nor I for him. There, now! And if I thought I could, wouldn't I write about him?"

"Oh, but you can, it is so easy, you know, and—"

"And what? Don't allow me to interrupt, I pray."

He was a handsome fellow who came unannounced into Miss Lambert's study, and Renie's face flushed deeper.

"Oh, Mr. Carlton," and Miss Lambert turned a rather amused face toward him. "I am trying to make a story—writer of our little Renie, here. Perhaps you will lend a hand in the magic transformation?"

He laughed, his white teeth gleaming under his brown mustache.

"What say you, Miss Morrison? Will you take me as—the dinner-gong sounded just then, so that Frank Carlton never finished the sentence.

"There," whispered Gustie to Renie, as Frank marshaled them down, "there's a subject for you. Work it up into a romance—that unfinished sentence of his."

A delightful bay window it was, with white lace curtains against the windows, and green silk draperies dividing it from the room proper, within this charming little sanctum was a small desk and arm-chair.

It looked as if awaiting some one; and some one came soon, looking so fresh and pretty in her white pique morning dress, trimmed with rich insertion and needlework edge.

She had placed a glowing pink rose-spray at her throat, and one tiny bud in her hair; and thus attired, Miss Renie Morrison went between the green silk curtains—to write a love story.

There was just a faint glimmer of sublime contempt in her pretty eyes as she seated herself before the pile of unrolled note paper, and dipped her ebony-handled gold pen into a splendid little flask of violet ink.

Then there was a slight hesitancy as the full-charged pen hovered over the paper.

"I must have a title, I suppose, the first thing. Let me think; what shall it be?"

Her eyes dreamily wandered over the shady graveled walks in the garden, doubtless in search of the missing title. Then the lips suddenly parted in a triumphant smile.

"If it hasn't all come to me like an inspiration! Gustie Lambert's was a capital one, and I'll make Frank Carlton see I am as indifferent to him as he dare be."

Perhaps Renie was not aware of the swift shadow of tender gloom that swept over the sweet face as she thought of Frank.

But a half-rough smile dimpled away the shade, and very rapidly, very boldly, she wrote her head-line, and heavily underscored it.

FRANK'S MISTAKE.

BY "SOMEBODY."

Then she held her curly head coquettishly to one side, and looked at the lines.

"It's just as easy as can be, and Gustie tries to make us all believe she's tried to death when she's done an hour's writing. An hour! why, it won't take me half that long to finish this."

Plunge went the pen again, and then came a second hesitation.

"I wonder how I ought to begin? Gustie's stories commence everyhow, conversations, descriptions and observations. Oh! that's easy enough, now I think of it."

And away went the pen, till it stopped from sheer state of exhaustion—of ink.

And this is what that penful of ink wrote, and I think Renie Morrison little thought what a fate there was in it:

"Brown eyes, merry and honest-hearted; a fine face, whose high-souled intelligence somehow commanded one's admiration unawares; a gentlemanly, tenderly kind demeanor—these are my hero's characteristics. But he made a mistake; he imagined 'somebody' loved him, when—"

Here the flow of thought was cruelly stopped, with the ink; and Renie took the opportunity to read what she had written.

"Pshaw! it doesn't sound at all nice. It hasn't at all the air of finished style Gustie's has! Now, I think that's mean."

And she frowned very prettily.

Then she heard somebody at the front door inquiring for her; and with a half-guilty blush, and a half-wistful look, hastily tore her attempt into several pieces, and thrust them under the pile of paper—that pile of forty pages that she

knew she could cover in an hour if they would only let her alone!

Lulu Hayes had just completed her call, and Renie hastened back to her desk, feeling as if the sun had lost much of its brightness, and the morning's beauty; for Lulu had just whispered a rumor that Frank Carlton was very attentive to a certain young lady who lived at the other end of the village.

And Renie had a slight idea that *maybe*, after all, it had been hers, instead of "Frank's Mistake."

Well, she supposed she couldn't help it if he preferred some one else; but there settled an intolerable pain somewhere about her heart.

Then, suddenly she discovered on the desk a little packet, addressed to her, and in Frank's handwriting.

She tore it open, with a sudden wild ecstasy, and there—

Was her mutilated story, neatly pasted on a fresh sheet of paper, and, where she had come to so sudden a pause, it was continued in Frank Carlton's chirography.

He was not at all mistaken; for a darling little 'somebody,' with the sweetest of eyes, and the most loving heart in all the world, loved him in return as fondly as he loved her. And 'Frank' does love 'somebody,' and he wants her for his own; will she accept the love he offers, and give him in return her own?"

Alternate flushes and pallors chased across her face; and then, in very bliss, she laid her head on her desk and cried.

And then that naughty, meddling, eavesdropping Frank stole in from behind the orange tree.

"Renie, dearest!"

And then—

Well, there was a wedding in less than a year; and Frank Carlton was the groom, and Renie Morrison the bride.

In Spite of Himself

BY EBEN E. REXFORD.

"Lemme see," said Mr. Payne, thoughtfully. "It must be pretty high time Elder Browning was to be around agin, ain't it?" to his wife, who was sitting opposite, engaged in mending the children's clothes.

"Yes; he was to be on the Bush Creek Mission by the fifteenth. This is the tenth."

"Well," said Mr. Payne, thoughtfully, as though revolving the matter in his mind, "I can't honestly say I'm glad he's comin'. He gits up an excitement when he comes, an' folks git what they *call* religion, but a'ter he goes off, I'll be bustled if it lasts long. It don't seem to be genuine."

"Do you think there is no such thing as religion, because some unstable folks who pretend to have it one day, and forget all about the next day, get excited on the subject?" Mrs. Payne asked.

"Oh, I don't say but there is such a thing," answered Mr. Payne, thoughtfully; "but what's the use of a person's making a fool of himself about it? Now there's Sam Layman. He gits 'brought out' every time there's a protracted effort, an' of all pious persons I ever heerd, he talks the piousett. But what good does it do him to git religion? He gits a new stock, as I said afore, every time they have a revival, an' afore the preacher comes agin, he'll swear an' cuss, an' go on as bad as ever. Now, if he's stayed religious at first, or a'ter he'd tried it an' found he couldn't make it work, if he'd jist left off makin' pretensions, folks 'ud a-thought a powerful sight more on him."

"I wish you wouldn't talk about your neighbors' shortcomings," put in Mrs. Payne.

"I ain't," responded Mr. Payne. "Leastwise, in a backbitin' sense. Now there's half a dozen boys that jined the church last time they had a revival here. How long did they stay with it? Why—jist as long as the excitement lasted. When that died away, they found they hadn't got religion, an' a'ter 'up to their honest principles, which did credit to 'em, a'ter he'd tried it an' found he couldn't make it work, if he'd jist left off makin' pretensions, folks 'ud a-thought a powerful sight more on him."

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Saturday Journal

Published every Monday morning at nine o'clock.
NEW YORK, APRIL 5, 1873.

A Stirring Sea Romance!

We shall, in our next number, give the opening chapters of a brilliant, dashing, intensely-exciting romance of Sea and Shore by an author who is now an immense favorite, viz.:

THE SEA CAT;
OR,
The Witch of Darien.

A STORY OF THE BUCCANEERS.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER,
AUTHOR OF "RED RAJA," "DOUBTLESS DEATH," "ROCK RIDER," ETC., ETC.

To the historical correctness of its main incidents, and the actual existence of the horrible "sea cat," the author superadds some of the strongest and most startling elements of interest we have ever known to be introduced to a sea story.

Morgan, the Buccaneer and Sea Rover!

comes to the front, in his true character. An Irish-Welshman by birth, he becomes a Spaniard by adoption, and a sailor and rover by taste for adventure and love of his gains. His career for audacity, for gallantry, for merciless pursuit of an enemy or a determined prize was something wonderful; and this career—or a portion of it rather—the author here makes the groundwork of a most brilliant story.

The Sea Cat is that

MONSTER OF THE DEEP

immortalized by Victor Hugo, in his "Tollers of the Sea"—the sea spider it more properly should be named, with tentacles or "feelers" many feet long, with which it grapples its prey, be it man or beast. This creature, in the Caribbean Sea, grows to monstrous dimensions, and with one of gigantic proportions Morgan is made to grapple, to save the beautiful Senorita, who is to become his prey.

The story details, not only the pure sea life of the dreaded Buccaneer, but the shore life of the fraternity or

Brotherhood of Sea Rovers,

who, taking possession of a stronghold at Darien, became, for a time, almost masters of the whole South American Coast, and of the whole region known as the "Spanish Main."

The daring Morgan having decided upon the conquest of the town of Panama, details that terrible descent of the Sea Bandits and the events that followed—out of which sprang the strangest of all strange events in Morgan's wild life, which this splendid story relates.

We present this tale with great satisfaction, adding as it does another to the

MASTERPIECES OF AMERICAN ROMANCE,

which it has been the SATURDAY JOURNAL'S pleasure to lay before its readers. One or two such serials per year would be sufficient to carry any ordinary weekly, but in this paper it is one of many!

Our Arm-Chair.

Authorship as a Profession.—In answer to a young friend's request, to express our views regarding authorship as a life pursuit, we have to say that we regard the "calling" of author as highly honorable and creditable, where there is special talent or genius behind; but, we must also admit that, as a profession, authorship is not, save in exceptional and unfrequent instances, remunerative or money-making. We believe we state what is essentially an admitted fact, that those who adopt "letters" (literature) as a profession, are, in nine cases out of ten, neither well-to-do in money matters nor happy.

This is owing chiefly to the influx of foreign brain-work, which our periodical and book publishers can have, without price. As a consequence, the market is not only overstocked but the American author is anticipated by the foreign, and, therefore, is only used by surferance, as it were. We are sorry for this state of things—it is, indeed, nationally discreditable; but, in the absence of an international copyright law, there is no help for it. Publishers, who do favor a Home and National Literature, are so hard pressed in the race of competition, by those who "appropriate," that it is, at times, extremely difficult to resist this pressure to use unpaid-for matter, or to pay the American author a fair price for his or her work.

If, in view of all these discouragements, our authors will write, it is an inspiring "sign of the times," since it shows our indomitable American spirit, and that we have talent so distinctive and decided that it will express itself, pay or no pay. When that good time does come, wherein property in a man's brain-work is regarded as sacredly as his property in patents, or bonds, or lands, then we shall see literature, as a profession in this country, a magnificent success.

Secret Signals.—In our last week's notes we answered a query regarding signals by a handkerchief. Much inquiry being made for these signals, we here give what is now the accepted "code":

"Drawing the handkerchief across the lips—desires of an acquaintance. Drawing across the eyes—I am sorry. Taking it by the corners—you are too willing. Dropping it—we will be friends. Twisting both hands—indifference. Drawing it across the cheek—I love you. Drawing through the hands—I hate you. Letting it rest

on the right cheek—yes. Letting it rest on the left cheek—no. Twisting it in the left hand—I wish to be rid of you. Twisting it in the right hand—I love another. Flung it—I wish to speak to you. Flirt it over the right shoulder—follow me. Opposite corners in both hands—wait for me. Drawing across the forehead—we are watched. Lifting to the right ear—you have changed. Letting it remain on the eyes—you are cruel. Winding around the forefinger—I am engaged. Winding it around the third finger—I am married. Putting it in the pocket—no more at present. Crump up in the hand—I am impatient. Touching the right eye twice—repeat your last signal."

But, let us repeat what we said last week—that no gentleman will presume to signal a lady with whom he has no acquaintance. To do otherwise is not merely rude; it is positively impudent, and any other gentleman would be justified in resenting the liberty, since the lady herself can not, with propriety, express her indignation or contempt.

We are well aware that certain persons calling themselves gentlemen, do signal ladies on the street or in assemblies, to whom they are utter strangers; but, such men are worse than ill-bred—they are insolent; and if they are not called to an account it is because they escape the observation of the lady's friends. We know of a case, a few days since, in which a certain young "blood" had his nose pulled and his face severely slapped by a young lady's father, and the verdict was promptly served him right, for repeatedly signaling the lady to "follow me."

Use the code, therefore, with extreme care, and always with a full knowledge that the lady is friendly and will take no offense at the sign of respect; otherwise you hazard your good name as a gentleman, and may commit an offense which is not readily overlooked.

Chat.—It is one thing to appreciate a good thing and to enjoy it personally, and another thing to seek to have others share in the enjoyment. To enjoy in silence and seclusion is not always selfish, for the privacy of one's room is the very place for the best mental pleasure; but that is selfish which refuses to impart to others the suggestion which will profit them, or the knowledge which will open up new resources of improvement and delight. A person, who, having delighted in a book, passes it over to others, commending its good points, is not the least of benefactors; and the reader of magazines or weekly papers who encourages others to become readers also, is essentially doing a service. Occasionally we receive such notes as the following from a reader in Akron, Ohio:

"Having been a constant reader of your beautiful and profitable paper ever since 'Tracked to Death' was commenced, we (wife and I) feel like recommending it to those in search of good things to read in leisure hours. Besides reading it regularly, I have obtained two other regular readers, who purchase it weekly."

Now, we'll venture a guess that this correspondent is a good man, a good neighbor and a good citizen—that he is well-informed, goes to church, sustains public schools and encourages enterprise in all proper ways—and this, not merely because he reads the SATURDAY JOURNAL, but for the spirit betrayed, of having others enjoy what has been a pleasure to him. If all who read this would go and do likewise, think of the many persons, young and old, now groping around listlessly for "something good to read," who would be pleased, benefited and encouraged to express their pleasure to others. Next to a good friend a good weekly paper is the greatest comfort, and we always feel like making any person our friend who not only takes such a weekly but seeks to have his friends do the same.

—Authors and correspondents will, in many cases, persist in refusal to comply with these orders:

- 1st. Fully prepaid all communications.
- 2d. Put no correspondence of any nature whatever in MS. prepaid at "Book" rates.
- 3d. Attempt to send no MS. as "Book" MS. which is to be used in a periodical.
- 4th. Remit stamps for MS. return if it is desirable to preserve it.

It is quite useless for any person to seek to ignore these rules or laws, for laws they are. They must be obeyed, else the delinquent package or author is the sufferer. We almost every day have packages come from the post-office marked "ten," "fifteen," "twenty" cents due, and of course refuse to receive them. As a consequence, they are irretrievably lost, for the Post Officials are utterly indifferent to any property rights in any thing they handle. Business with them simply means postage and delivery—nothing more. They will just as soon consign \$100 MS. to the refuse paper cellar as an old newspaper—it is all "waste" to them. They want their postage; postage is what they will have; and all correspondents can do to see that the proper postage is fully prepaid. For want of this precaution many a valuable MS. has gone irretrievably into the cellar; and in some cases the authors have complained that we did not reserve the package and pay the amount due, in order to save the loss of the MS. It is useless to ask us to do this. It is the author's first business to obey the above injunctions; when he violates them he does so at his own loss.

CONVENIENT DISTANCES.

The way our country neighbors are besieged every summer would seem to contradict the adage that "every man's house is his castle," because it is not so by any means. People, who want to get along through the hot months in a cheap way, always find some one who lives at such a convenient distance from the city that they surely must be visited.

Perhaps some farmer furnishes a certain family with provisions, and that is sufficient excuse for the family to post themselves off, the next summer, to the farmer's house. There they take up their quarters. To be sure, they pay their board, but very grudgingly it is done. They seem to imagine that eggs, butter and milk cost nothing. Let them go to churning butter some day and see how their arms will feel at the end of the experiment.

Grandma Lawless used to say, if a yellow dog was to run across her farm, it was excuse enough for the family who owned the dog to pass the next summer with them, she lived at such a convenient distance. Well, 'tis about so now. Imagine, if you please, my dear city reader, a hot day and plenty of work for the farmer and his wife: don't you suppose that, when it becomes dark, they'd be glad enough to retire and forget their cares in a world of dreams?

Yet I have known of a party of six or seven coming at that very time to remain for two or three days, and, of course, the poor, tired farmer's wife must go to work to get them up a supper, for she must not forget her hospitality, be she ever so weary, and she must look pleased enough to utter the falsehood of "I am so glad to see you."

Yes, and we country folks are glad to see you when you'll come at proper times. Supposing we do live at a convenient distance, that's no reason we should have company unheralded and unasked, is it?

You don't like to be beset with visitors at your city homes, if even your friends do live at a convenient distance from you, I know; then why should we, poor innocent rustics, revel in the idea?

Mrs. Townly finds the weather growing ex-cruciatingly warm, and thinks it will be a good idea to close her house for the summer, and go visiting her friend, who, of course, lives at a convenient distance.

"Why, it don't cost them any thing to live, you know, and they must certainly be delighted to have us there! It will fully pay them to hear my description of the fashions," says Mrs. Townly.

You needn't laugh, for this is not foolish fiction; it is stern reality.

"But," you say, "you always do have such a good time and enjoy yourself so much in the country, and really everybody seems so glad to have us there."

We are not savages and Hottentots; we don't look as if we wanted to say "You're here quite long enough," but, sometimes, our heart does sink within us when we see the stage-coach drive up to our door and a family of five or six emerge therefrom, with the same number of trunks and boxes.

"Eve's selfish, isn't she? Wants her little cottage all to herself! Don't suppose she'd treat us well, if we went to visit her, do you?"

You're mistaken, my dear friend, and my cottage stands with its door open, and you'd be made welcome, provided you came when I was in one of my angelic moods. Why, there are some people I'd give worlds to have pass a summer with me, but they can't get away, for the simple reason that they are always overburdened with company, for they live on the line of the railway, and, of course, at a very convenient distance.

There comes the stage-coach now; company ahlts, and I must say good-by to stationery. Excuse me if I say I wish we didn't live at such a convenient distance. EYE LAWLESS.

INGRATITUDE.

It is indeed, "more blessed to give than to receive," and we should ever give, freely and willingly, what it is in our power to bestow. The more we give, the more we receive, for the hope of reward in return, still it is no more than natural we should expect persons to be grateful for what we do for them.

The simple words, "Thank you," seem to come so spontaneously to our lips, that it ever seems strange that all do not use them, but some individuals there are who appear as though they would rather receive a whipping than utter them.

It is a mystery why this is so. If we expect kindness we should be grateful for it, and not be so boorish as to receive gifts in sullen silence. It seems as though we were under the impression that the world was made only for us, and what we have done for us is no more than our own right, and what we should expect—in which case we have nothing to be grateful for. It is a strange way to argue, but it is not like the world's arguing at large?

We hear of parents tending their children with care, kindness and attention, depriving themselves of comforts and pleasures that their offspring may not want for any thing, and these same children grow up and are in situations to make the lives of their parents smooth-sailing; do they do it?

Parents are treated with disrespect, are styled, "the old man," and the "old woman," while their advice is looked upon as officiousness, and their conversation as behind the times we live in.

Is it not shameful to think that these remarks are true, that every day cases come up before us where the parents' love is repaid by the basest of ingratitude?

The very home they have labored so hard to keep may be torn from them by their own children, and they sent adrift in the world to live on the charities of the stranger. Is it because hearts are dying out, and marble is taking the place of human flesh? Is money gaining such mastery over us, that we are willing to put away our own kith and kin, that we may have less to provide for? If this is so, how can we expect the Omnipotent Being to care for us, to show us mercy and forgiveness if we disobey His laws of duties to parents? In His eyes, ingratitude is looked upon with abhorrence.

A Star Shower.

Our poets will have their say upon subjects which the prose-writer chatters about, wearily enough sometimes. As for instance: here, in this tender tribute to a whole novel, or biography, or life sketch:

TRUE LOVE.

My love as a lily was fair
In the days long since gone by,
And her voice, like a thrill of music rare,
My soul with a noble harmony.
Ah! her pure white face,
And her step so light,
And her clear, bright eyes,
And gentle grace
Were my soul's delight
In the days gone by.
My wife is wrinkled and old,
Her voice is cracked, they say,
But unchanged toward her is the love I hold,
Though the bloom of her youth has passed away;
And her voice seems sweeter to me each day,
Ah! her soul is fair!
And my heart's delight
Is her love pure;
'Tis a treasure rare
That time can not blight,
And will age endure.

—W. C. PHILLIPS, JR.

What can be more artfully told than this sweetly and quaintly-rhythmed story of woman's ways?

TWA WAYS.

Long years ago I met a miss,
An' she was pretty, pretty,
We met an' parted w' a kiss.
An' that was many a year,
An' she was gaing her ain gate,
An' I gaed mine.
I met again the pretty miss,
An' we were well together,
An' I was waiting, poor biles,
When lo! 'I was her brother
An' she gaed her ain gate,
An' I gaed mine.

Ahin a year we met a mair,
An' shortly t'wain.
She mad' me soon forget the "frere,"
An' then she ca'd me "frin!"
An' she's gaing her ain gate,
Maun I gaed mine.

—DONALD.

How much point is in this suggestive little sermon in verse! Some sermons will talk a whole hour and not say as much.

THE VOYAGEURS.

A king, a pope, and a kaiser,
And a queen—most fair was she—
Went sailing, sailing, sailing,
Over a sunny sea happy.
And amid them sat a beggar—
A churl of low degree;
And they all went sailing, sailing,
Over a sunny sea.
The king said to the kaiser,
And his comrade, fair and free:
'Let us turn adrift this beggar,
This churl of low degree,
For he taints the balmy odors
That flow to you and me,
As we travel—sailing, sailing,
Over the sunny sea.
'The ship is mine,' says the beggar,
'And we're all of us sailing, sailing,
To the grave, o'er this sunny sea.'

And you may not, and you can not
Get rid of mine or me;
No, not for your crowns and scepters,
And my name is Death," quoth he.

—W. J. BARRON.

Nor is this brief poem less happily expressed, while the moral is far more significant than many a book of "Advice to Young Men."

A THOUGHT.

Gazing on the wide, blue ocean,
Did I on the sloped shore stand,
Watching waves in graceful motion,
Rolling up the pebbly strand;
Lingering still, admiring, curious,
Gently they around me crept,
Till from 'neath me foothold washing,
Which I near to sea outswep.
"Thus," thought I, "the youth of leisure"
Gaze on the motions sweet
Of the luring waves of pleasure,
As they play around his feet;
Lingering still, admiring, curious,
Gently they around him creep,
Till from 'neath him foothold washing,
Which I near to sea outswep.

MALCOLM TAYLOR, JR.

One of our poets who illustrates the apothegm that "poets are but teachers in disguise," launches this sharp javelin of rhyme at the purse-proud:

HONEST, BUT POOR.

How oft are the indigent called to endure,
From former who are rich, "He is honest, BUT POOR!"
As if the misfortune of indigence stains,
Like crime, a man's character, virtues and brains.
Would they be content with the first recommend,
And leave off the adjunct (which can but offend),
We would not demur, for a merited praise
All men can appreciate, and welcome always.
Too often the first is the key to the next,
The absence of which would reverse the whole text;
And, (if I'm allowed to interpret it), which
Would be by the change, "He is a knave, BUT HE'S RICH!"

Which can but imply that we're bound to connive,
At the crimes of a knave, if he only do thrive;
For riches (like charity) cover much crime,
Which I don't see exactly, tho' it may be sublime.
Although these detractors on honesty frown,
And ask, as it's poor, to trample it down,
It still is a virtue that brighter will glow,
As poverty round it, its shadows may throw.

JOSEPH FLACKETT.

Foolsap Papers.

Short Biography from My New Reader.

JAKE ELIHALET GREEN was both so long before calendars were invented that he has lost all recollection of it, but he thinks he was. When about three weeks of age, he nearly succumbed to a malicious attack of the croup; had it carried him off in its arms, it is quite likely that the balance of his life would have been a little obscure and his wife a widow.

When he was six weeks old, he was presented with a set of false teeth and a wig. As he grew bigger, he got older, and was such a good boy that he soon learned to read before he even learned the alphabet; he could read as well with his eyes shut as with them open, and could read the contents of a book by looking at the back. He always did what his mother told him so well and readily, and without growling, that he soon got so he could cipher out the most difficult sum in arithmetic on the parlor wall with a piece of red chalk before he even knew one figure from another or any thing else.

He never pulled his sister's hair, and soon got so he could tell a good egg from a bad one merely by looking at the contents.

So persistently did he quit telling so many lies so much that he soon got to be one of the best bareback riders in his part of the country; and so seldom did he lick his venerable father that, before he was sixteen years old, he could take more tricks with a poor hand at eucher than his partners ever could see how.

About this time it was that he fell into the river, and if he had never got out, in all human probability he would have remained there and would have drowned, and very likely become a corpse, as dead people of late are apt to become, if kept too long, in this country.

Then an enraged steer tossed him on its horns, sending him up sixteen feet (which is a fact, for he afterward went back and measured it himself); and the most shuddering reflection on this affair is, what if he had kept on going up? The bare thought is horrible. Where would he have been to-day? But he came down again. On such slight things do human destinies hang. One day he very thoughtlessly blew into the muzzle of his gun to see if it was loaded; his foot slipped off the hammer—oh, it was awful!—and would have been worse if the gun had been loaded.

He always boasted of his excellent raising; indeed, he was fed upon nothing when he was young but yeast, and was kept close to the stove so he would raise nice; he was also partly raised with derrick. His parents were too poor to assist him getting an education or to buy candles for him, so he used to tear the last page he read out of the book and light it to read the next one by, and in a single night it was a common thing for him to exhaust a book completely—he hadn't even a pine knot to read by, as some other great men had.

His intellect developed with astonishing rapidity, and music became one of his accomplishments, in which he was so proficient that nothing in the wide world but circumstances prevented Barnum from making an engagement with him at a hundred thousand dollars a year. He could make the most tumultuous music by only getting up and dancing on the keys of a piano with his stupa boots on.

When he was old enough to enter college, he sat in to learn brick-making, at which he labored until he heard they wanted a bank president in New York, and started in to work at the shoe-making business. Shortly after this a railroad train ran off the track, but providentially he sustained no great injuries, as he wasn't on the train.

If Mr. Green had been President of the United States (and he would have been if, if well, f), this biography would be a little more extensive, with extracts from his messages, inauguration speech, treaties, etc.; but, nevertheless, he has succeeded so well in all his ambitious undertakings that he has been enabled to stick to the shoemaking business until the present day.

If Mr. Green's name is not known far and wide, it is simply because it was kept close and narrow. Even Dr. Livingstone, who has spent some years in the heart of Central Africa for the purpose of establishing an International Copyright system with the chiefs, never heard of his name even there. This is a shame, and shows the heartlessness of popular prejudice. He is growing old (he has tried every means in the world to prevent it; every day he turns his clock back three days), and some of these days he will go to a looking-glass and find that he is no more in this world; it remains for us to acknowledge his merits.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

OUR religion is to be estimated, not by a few intensities, but by a vital and generous glow and activity throughout our whole life. We are not to mourn because we feel; but if, having feeling in that life, we may well mourn.

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully paid in postage. No MSS. received for future orders. Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only where stamps accompany the inclosure, for such return.—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or wanted. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness; second, upon excellence of MS. as "copy"; third, length. Of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note paper as most convenient to editor and compositor, tearing off each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its full page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unsuitable to us are well worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find us ever ready to give their offerings early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

To the following contributions we say "yes," and place on the accepted list to use when occasion offers, viz.: "A Bashful Lover's Letter," "True Love," "Twa Ways," "The Mexican Guide," "Winning a Bride," "A Love Match," "That Graceless Brother," "Ten Years' Probation," "Keeping a Tryst," "The Lake Song," "A Bacchic," "The Fireman's Leap," "A Trapper's Ghost," "Ben, the Joiner's Apprentice," "The Unknown Correspondent."

We shall not use these MSS., and return those where stamps were remitted for such return, viz.: "Elele's Deceit," "Saved from Death," "Wives," etc.; "Satisfactory to All," "The Book of the Club," "Field and Technical," "Miss as a Good as a Mile," "A Mule Ride in Tennessee," "Nancy, the Daughter of Jones," "A Bank Clerk's Oath," "Rising in the Morning," "What's the Use?" "A Daughter of Peace."

B. B. We can't advise you on such matters. FRED W. Ten cents each issue. Sent by mail at any time.

W. H. R. Have written to you.—Same to H. F. B. and Miss L. L. C. E. B. Webster's Dictionary. It is pronounced as *peach*, and implies chagrin, mortified pride, etc.

CHAS. L. C. See answer to your query in article in editorial column. Your chirography is good.

ABRAHAM L. We should say be sure the lady wants to continue your acquaintance before she writes her again.

MISS P. T. B. "George Elliot" is not Miss Evans, but is Mrs. Lewes. She is the best paid living author—having, it is stated, received \$40,000 on account of her last story, *Middlemarch*.

LEARNED JON. Old Coomes is under engagement to write only for the SATURDAY JOURNAL. A new story from his pen is in hand awaiting its "turn." Mayne Reid is now abroad and writes for no other paper, when he does write at all.

A CONSTANT READER. No; we do not think a "dressed" young man is likely to be more popular with the ladies. A woman who will rate the man by his dress is just the woman to cut and dit, and matter whether the well-dressed for are not the sensible or desirable portion of female society. Wear not only clean clothing but that which is contented in cut and dit, and matter whether it is broadcloth, cassimere or fustian, if it is proper to your calling and work, it is the "right thing to wear."

BASE-BALL PLAYER. Yes; Beadle's Dime Base-Ball Player is the standard in the field, and has been for years. Each annual edition is an entirely new work, giving all the latest news of the game, all the necessary instructions to beginners and amateurs, all the laws of the game, Field and Technical Rules, all the best Averages of the year, etc., etc. Such a volume is invaluable to players and visitors to the play-ground. There are a number other Field Ball Manuals and Guides and Instructions and Companions and Field-Books, but none can compare with the above-mentioned volume, edited and printed by the Sporting Reporter, Henry Chadwick. The Twelfth Annual Edition is now in press.

MISS T. C. Miss Caroline Chesbore, the authoress, died at Plimouth, N. Y. She had been a teacher both in the Plimouth Institute, Brooklyn, and in the Female Seminary at Canandaigua, N. Y., but during the last few years of her life had retired to the quiet of a country home at Plimouth. She was a writer of a number of novels, but never essentially popular. Her methods of thought and expression were too reflective and refined to strike the masses, and yet she wrote with a rare grace for the magazines. Her published books number some five or six volumes only.

BENNY HAMPTON. We suppose Robinson Crusoe to be the book of largest circulation in the English language (the Bible of course excepted)—greater even than Shakespeare's Works. The next in order is Shakespeare; then Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*; then, undoubtedly, comes Keble's *Christian Year*, which, in thirty-six years, has run through one hundred and fifty-one editions. Of Walter Scott's works the circulation has been immense, but no one volume of his has run through as many editions as the above-named. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* aggregated about 250,000 copies in five or six years' time—which is the greatest success of any book since Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is a fiction.

VALENTINE. A big dictionary is a good thing to have—a small one is better than none. The value of such a book is not half appreciated, even by many persons of intelligence. Keep the dictionary ever at hand in your room and refer to it when you have any doubt to solve as to words and their significance. Such a course will, almost before you are aware of it, make you precise in speech and wise in many ways.

COCHRANE. The sun has no perceptible motion. To us it is perfectly stationary. It is questionable, indeed, if it has any axial motion. The variation of position to the earth is wholly due to the revolution of the earth in its elliptical orbit—advancing and receding from the sun with the progress of the seasons. Obtain some popular text-book on astronomy, and you will find, in the name of the above-named, what you want. You will find, in the name of the above-named, what you want. You will find, in the name of the above-named, what you want.

T. W. F. We are really nearer the sun in winter than in summer—that is, our planet is in the perihelion of its orbit. The reason why it is colder in this orbital position than when the planet is in aphelion (or furthest from the sun), is the angle at which the sun's rays strike the earth's atmosphere—direct in one case and oblique in the other. The sun's rays penetrate direct to the earth's surface, and is equally direct in the other case, the oblique ray is deflected, reflected and dispersed by the surrounding aerial medium or air, which is, essentially, a gas.

RED ROVER. The "Art of Self-Defense" can be learned in any good gymnasium. It is not necessary to seek out a "rough" for a teacher. The art is learned, like the sword exercise, only by much practice. Avoid the "bruiser's" company and prize-ring, as you would avoid any evil and degrading thing. Men who practice the "art of self-defense" as a business are almost invariably loafers and brutes.

HISTORIAN. Pocahontas, Indian princess, married Rolfe, at the age of eighteen, and lived in the green, but her character will not bear microscopic examination.

SEVENTH REGIMENT. Gen. Lee surrendered under an apple tree in Appomattox, a little place midway between Farmville and Lynchburg. No monument marks the spot. Appomattox is a name, more, is the place for a monument to the "Lost Cause."

ERNESTINE R. The word which is translated "scribe," in the English Bible, signifies a "writer." It was applied to an officer of the king, or, as we should say, a secretary of state.

HOUSEKEEPER. Arsenic is used to a fearful extent in the preparation of wall papers, not only in the green, but in many other of the apparently harmless colors, and sometimes it causes sickness to the inmates of the house. Avoid green papers.

CROQUETTY. Gas is made by putting about two bushels of bituminous coal in a long direct retort. This retort is heated red hot, and the gas bursts out of it, as you see it burst out of lumps of soft coal when on the parlor fire. The gas passes off through the pipes, while hot; it is thus led off into another building; it is forced through long, perpendicular pipes, surrounded with cold water. This cools it, and a bituminous tar condenses from it, and runs down to the bottom of these perpendicular pipes. This tar is the ordinary "coal tar," used for walks and roofs. The gas is next washed, and called "scrubbing." Now the gas is then considered as made. It is passed through this gas station meter to the "mains" in the streets, and thence by smaller conduits to houses and rooms.

PAULINE NEALY. To prevent your pie-crust from soaking or becoming heavy, glaze the under crust with beaten whites of eggs.

HUNTER. The first piece of artillery was invented by the Germans shortly after the invention of gunpowder, and artillery was first used by the Moors at Algiers, in Spain, over five hundred years ago.

ANDREW BRADY. The expression, *Almighty Dollar*, originated with Washington Irving.

PHYSICS. The circulation of the blood was discovered by Harvey, in the year 1619. Prior to that time physicians had no correct knowledge of the part which the human heart played in the animal economy.

JULIA C. An experiment similar to the one you mention can be done in the following manner: take five or three leaves of red cabbage, cut them fine; put them in a dish, and pour a pint of boiling water on them; let this stand one hour, and then pour the liquid into a decanter. Take three wine glasses. Into one put six drops of solution of soda; into a second the same quantity of a strong solution of alum; let the

WRECKED!

BY JENNIE GUEST.

I saw two barks, one autumn day,
Launched on the waters, then sail away,
While hopeful hearts beat high and fast,
As the barks from the sight of the gazeers passed.
But at night, their hopes were shorn of their crown,
For these same two vessels in darkness, went down—
Down with their freight of human lives,
Parting—mother and son, husbands and wives;
And a loud cry rose from that desolate shore,
For the loved and lost, who would come—nevermore.

Just so the bark of our hopes is wrecked,
While we keep our faces with smiles bedecked;
We dare not cry out with passionate moan,
All joy has departed and we are alone.
The pride of our hearts, for the sake of our friends,
Is strong; and to the cold world never unbends;
So, with smiles and songs, and gay repartee,
The observer, the outside only can see;
But in the silence and solitude of our own room,
We mourn the frail bark that met such a doom.

Lizzie's Sacrifice.

BY MATTHEW DYER BRITTS.

The soft September sunshine was not brighter than pretty Lizzie Mathews' eyes as she tripped up Chestnut street in her tasty walking-dress, only the day before Mrs. Gregory's great party.

And, tucked snugly in Lizzie's pocket, was a little purse containing a crisp new fifty-dollar bill, which was to buy the prettiest dress Lizzie could find, for that very party; so no wonder her sweet face was so bright; a new dress will brighten a woman's face almost any time, you know.

Just as she tripped across Eighth street, Lizzie saw something which made her cheeks brighter yet, for she met the tall form of Dr. Harry Clark, and got a smile and a bow as he passed her, and if her girl's heart beat a little quicker under her trim bodice, I don't know that was anybody's business, for Dr. Clark was—well, he was a good friend of Lizzie's, and sometimes—well, some day he might be more, you know.

Lizzie meant to go to Levy's—that was the best store for silks, and here she was, right at the very place. She stopped a moment to look at a blue silk temptingly draped in the show-window, with a gleam of morning sunshine falling full across its gleaming folds.

"Oh, that beautiful, beautiful blue! That lovely, lovely thing!" cried she, softly, in an ecstasy of delight. "Oh, I do wonder if I can afford that! Yes, there is the price-card; a dollar and a half. Let's see—twenty yards will do—that comes to thirty dollars; ten more will get the trimmings, and the other ten new gloves, and pay Mrs. Crane for the making. Oh, ain't I glad! I'll go right in and get it, for there's nothing prettier in the whole city, I'm sure!"

She turned to go up the steps into the great store, when a light touch fell on her arm, and a small voice said: "Miss Mathews!"

Lizzie looked and recognized the little daughter of the seamstress, Mrs. Crane, who often brought home work for her mother.

"Well, Annie, what is it?" said Lizzie, kindly.

"I was going to your house, to tell you ma can't come to sew to-day, for she is now sick," said the child.

"Oh, I am so sorry!" cried Lizzie. "Is she much sick, Annie?"

"Yes'm; she hasn't been out of bed since last Sunday."

"Why, who takes care of her?" asked Lizzie.

"Nobody but me, and I can't do much," said little Annie.

"No, I think not!" returned Lizzie. And then her kind little heart prompted her to a sudden resolution. "Annie, I am going to see your mother," she said. "Will you show me the way?"

"Oh, yes! ma'll be so glad; but we don't live in a nice street like this, Miss Mathews."

"Never mind; I shall not be afraid," said Lizzie.

But it was quite a new part of the city into which her little guide led her, and she shrank a little from the rough faces she met.

They stopped at a great noisy brick house, and went up several rickety flights of stairs, before they reached the poor, bare room which the widow called her home. Yet, here as it was, Lizzie's quick eye noticed that it was perfectly clean. The widow was as much surprised as pleased to see her visitor, and answered all her questions in a quiet, ladylike manner.

"You have a good doctor?" said Lizzie.

"I have not had any," answered Mrs. Crane.

"Oh, you should have!" cried Lizzie.

"Yes, I know it. But, Miss Mathews, I have not one cent to pay a doctor, and I could not ask one to come."

"But how are you to get along?" asked Lizzie, ready to cry from sympathy.

"I don't know," said the widow, sadly.

"When I am well, I can make enough to pay our rent and provide for Annie and myself, but now, if I must lie here long, I don't know what we shall do."

"Have you any money?" asked Lizzie, suddenly.

"Not now. I had to pay our room-rent yesterday, and it took all I had."

"What have you had to eat to-day?" asked Lizzie, in the same abrupt manner.

"There was some bread left—and—that was all," said Mrs. Crane, turning away her face.

"Well," said Lizzie, rising from her seat and speaking with a look of determination, "I'm not going to have this state of things. I came here to help you, Mrs. Crane, and you must let me do it. I may need it some day myself, you know."

She took her purse from her pocket and was about to put its contents into Mrs. Crane's hand, when she took a second thought. "I had better spend part of this for you, myself," she said; "the shopkeepers will do better by me than they will by Annie. I'll get some things you need, and then I'll come back. And I know a good doctor who will come to see you, and I'm going to bring him."

So, without waiting for the poor woman's thanks, she hurried down the stairs into the street. She went first to a grocer's and ordered a generous supply of tea, sugar, rice, butter, and other things needful for comfort. Then she purchased some grapes, oranges, and a bottle of wine, and ordered her carriage for a drive, and then she turned her steps toward the office of her father's old family physician, Doctor Bryant.

She had gone half the distance, when she remembered that Dr. Bryant was out of town, and would be for some weeks.

"Now, what shall I do?" said she to herself. "It's only a few steps to Dr. Clark's office, but I don't like to go there. Yes, I will, too; and if he is the man I think him, he will go. If he don't—well, he will lose one friend, that's all."

She quickened her pace, and with a beating heart entered Dr. Clark's little office. He was there, and rose in great surprise, the color coming into his own fine face, to greet his visitor.

Lizzie told her errand, and said as she finished:

"She is very poor, and it is a poor place; I don't expect she will be able to pay you, but—"

"But she is human and must be cared for," finished the doctor. "You shall pilot me, Miss Lizzie, and I will go at once."

And so the next thing little Lizzie knew she was walking back to Mrs. Crane's, with her hand on Doctor Clark's arm. When they arrived there, she quietly put the money left from her purchase into Mrs. Crane's hand, telling her to use it as she needed it, and made her escape as quickly as she could, promising to come again.

Late in the afternoon of the next day, she went, and, strange to say, found Dr. Clark making another visit also. Mrs. Crane was better, and had a woman from the floor below to stay with her. So, finding she could be of no use, Lizzie made a very short call. But before she was fairly down the stairs, Dr. Clark joined her, and as they went out together, he asked Lizzie if he might call for her to go to Mrs. Gregory's.

"I am not going," said Lizzie, quietly.

"Not going? You said you would go, Tuesday evening."

"Well, I meant to then," said Lizzie, half-laughing, "but, the truth is, Dr. Clark, I am like poor Flora McFlimsey, I absolutely have nothing to wear." And seeing the doctor's puzzled look, she added: "Papa gave me fifty dollars yesterday to buy a dress, but I—I used it for other things, and I did not like to ask him for more so soon. And Mrs. Gregory would never forgive me if I wore an old dress, so I concluded not to go."

"Ah!" remarked the doctor, and if Lizzie had watched him closely she could have seen a light break over his face during her last sentence. And if she had heard what Mrs. Crane had been telling the doctor before she came in to call, she would have known just what it meant.

"Well," said Doctor Clark, "ladies must have their own way, I suppose. But I shall not agree with Mrs. Gregory, for I should be as glad to see you in an old dress as a new one. I shall not go to the party unless you do. May I come and spend the evening with you?"

"Yes, if my society can make up for all the gay company you would meet there, you may," said Lizzie.

"Your society could make up for all the world besides, and I shall come," said the doctor, as he left her at her own door. And, notwithstanding that the lovely blue silk dress gleamed in Levy's window, Lizzie went in with a happy heart beating in her tender bosom.

Dr. Clark made his appearance at an early hour, and they had a nice evening together. But Lizzie did not intend to tell you all they said.

But this much I may tell, that just before they parted, Dr. Clark took Lizzie tenderly in his strong arms, and said, gently:

"I loved you before, my own darling, and when I knew what a true, generous, womanly heart you had, I could not help telling you. If love can make up for your sacrifice, dearest—"

"Hush!" whispered Lizzie. "There is none, for it is made up ten thousandfold now."

And then the doctor—well, the doctor did just what I expect you would have done, my dear reader, if you had been in his place, and that's all I need tell you about it.

The Beautiful Forger:

OR, THE ADVENTURES OF A YOUNG GIRL.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLETT.

AUTHOR OF "MADEIRA'S MARRIAGE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HALF-BREED'S ADIEU.

ULRIC had more than once revisited the spot where he had buried the money; and his last going was to move it. Words can not describe his rage when he found that it had been taken away. He made a frantic search in the neighborhood, with loud complaints, and learned from the deaf old man—who concealed his own instrumentality—that the box had been recovered and restored to Dr. Merle himself, who had carried it off.

There remained no hope of regaining the stolen prize; Ulric must devise other means of carrying out his ambitious schemes and gratifying the mad passion that had grown by disappointment.

He bethought himself of the strange lady who had manifested desperate projects to accomplish, and determined to mend his fallen fortunes by linking them with hers.

Olivia Sloman's chagrin and anger at the escape of her captive, equalled Ulric's at the loss of the purloined treasure. She had procured the articles named on the list, and went herself to confer with the doctor on the day following his escape.

With her keys she made her way to the apartment where he had been confined, and found it empty. No trace could be discovered to reveal how he had left the prison and eluded pursuit. He could not have leaped from the window, though she detected the loosening of the bars. Some one had either entered the warehouse surreptitiously and let down the trap by which she had descended, or had contrived to supply him with a rope-ladder by the window. Her suspicions fell on his assistant, the half-breed.

She had heard of a clever assistant in Dr. Merle's house, whose cunning and sagacity had rendered him service. She knew him now to be the same who had followed her, whom she had taken for a boy, and who had concealed himself in her room that night. No doubt it was by his aid that the doctor had contrived the pretended magical illusory scene that had so terrified Louise that the girl had hardly been herself since.

To a woman of Olivia's haughty spirit and imperious will, the idea of having been cheated and baffled was humiliating and irritating enough; in addition to this her fears were on the alert.

Her grand schemes required that she should stand free from suspicion. When the time came for her to present the claims she held to almost imperial sway in the metropolis of California, she must enter on her dominion as a queen, against whom none could allege a crime. Hence the secrecy of her dealings with Querecos, necessary as he was to her success. Hence her jealous hate of those whom she had not been able to hoodwink. Her bitterness toward Dr. Merle and his assistant, who, she doubted not, had contrived her escape, moved her to plan various schemes of vengeance.

She had ordered her carriage for a drive, and was sitting alone when Gilbert announced a visitor. Something significant in the man's looks struck her, and she called him back.

"Who is it?" she asked, sharply. "No stranger, as I see by your smile."

"No, my lady; but you might not know him again. It is the 'boy' you told me to give supper and lodgings to the night when—"

"Silence! He has dared to come here!"

"He desired to see you, and says he has something of importance to say."

"Some message from his master. Well, he may come in."

The man retired. Olivia rang the bell, and when Louise appeared, gave orders that she

should remain in attendance on her husband, and not permit any one to disturb her.

Ulric needed all his native self-possession to encounter the severe looks of the lady in whose presence he found himself.

"So—you have come to me in a different character this time, sir! You no longer sing for a living, eh?"

The half-breed laughed, and his mirth was an additional offense.

"It tickles you to think you imposed on me, no doubt. Now you come in your own character, with a message from Dr. Merle. Where is he?"

"I do not know, madam."

"No lying. Did he not send you?"

"No, madam, he did not. I have left his service, if you may call it so."

"Aha! He has turned you adrift!"

"I left him because I did not like his practices."

"What practices?"

"He is an adept in witchcraft."

"Pshaw! Do you expect me to believe in such stuff as that?"

"It is generally believed that he dabbles in the black art. You yourself have seen, madam, something of his work."

"With your help. Come; you need not try games of that sort with me. What is it you want, if he did not send you?"

"I want," replied Ulric, coming nearer, "your help to punish him."

"What has he done to you?"

"He is my enemy," was the evasive answer.

"And he is yours."

"Mine? Why should you think so?"

"I have heard him say he meant to ruin you."

"If he could."

"And you are in his power; you can not deny it."

Olivia's dark eyes flashed.

"How is that, I pray you?"

"Suppose he were to give information of what happened the night of your first visit to him! Suspicion would be attached to you. And suppose he disclosed the fact that you had him kidnapped and carried off, lest he should discover your nefarious plans?"

As he spoke thus boldly, Ulric fixed his keen eyes on those of the lady, determined to obtain the mastery over her if possible, so that he could mold her to his schemes. He saw her start and turn pale, and avert her face.

"You see, madam, your liberty would be endangered, if all he could say were made public. The safety of the community requires a strict watch over those who do not scruple to violate the law."

"He helped him to escape!" said Olivia, trying to speak in steady tones.

"I did not; he accomplished that by his magical arts. I had availed myself of his absence to take away his daughter."

"His daughter—you?"

"Yes; you may see what has driven me from him. I love the girl; I would marry her; and he looks on me as if I were one of the black race, or an Indian. He scorns me, and I have vowed revenge upon him."

"And the girl—does she love you?"

"She would marry me if I could have opportunity to show her the advantages she would gain."

"They are quite apparent," said the lady, surveying him with scorn. "Few women could resist you, surely. You said you had taken her away. Where is she?"

"She has been taken from me again. I suppose she is with her father."

"Ah, and you would have my assistance in recovering her?"

"I would be glad of it."

"And what means would you recommend? You have shown me how dangerous any overt act of violence would be."

"You can accuse him of sorcery. Such a charge can never be headed. You can obtain the custody of the young girl, who will have no home, and—"

"Stay; you wish me to take a great deal of trouble to put a man out of your way."

"And out of your own. You are in more danger from him than I am."

"And what will you do to discharge your obligation?"

"If you like I will enter your service. I am able to advance any of your projects."

"Indeed! You have a high opinion of your talents. Do you know any thing of medicine?"

"A little. I have helped Dr. Merle in the surgery sometimes."

"What do you think of this?" and the lady drew from her pocket the list her prisoner had shoved under the door.

Ulric examined it and a smile curved his thick lips.

"These are the materials for a sheep-wash, madam."

"A sheep-wash! Are they not drugs of powerful medical qualities?"

"Of none at all. If he gave you this as a prescription he was fooling you."

"Are any of the materials dangerous—to life?"

"Not in the least. Your maid might swallow them, and the only result would be, they might act as a swift emetic."

"Very well; give me the paper."

She returned it to her pocket. A crimson spot glowed on her cheeks.

"You would find it for your advantage, Mrs. Sloman, to engage me. In fact, I know too much about you and your doings to render it safe for you to refuse my request."

"You know very little about me."

"I know something both of you and of one you have trusted; it may be to your own discomfort."

"What do you mean?" demanded Olivia, rising from her seat.

"The papers which a certain Spanish gentleman has sent to you from time to time, in payment for loans and supplies furnished."

"What of them?" she questioned, with eager attention.

Ulric came close to her, and beckoned her to stoop lower, glancing furtively round the room, to see that no one was within hearing. Then he whispered something in her ear.

She started from him, and caught the back of the chair as a support.

"It is false!" she gasped, faintly.

"It is true!" he averred, looking her full in the eyes.

"You have no means of knowing any thing at all about them."

"I assure you that I have."

"And you hold this as a threat over me?"

"I would make a compact with you; let me enter your service, and we will in the same boat. I shall not be unreasonable about a salary. You may employ me as a secretary. I will do you good service."

The lady mused.

"Can you wait till to-morrow for my answer?" she asked.

"Till to-morrow—but no longer."

"Come, then, to-morrow, at this hour. I will see you or send some one who will tell you what I have decided on."

"Your decision will be favorable to me, I can not doubt," the half-breed said, as he bowed low in taking leave. "Knowledge is power," he muttered to himself as he went out.

The lady rang a bell and ordered her carriage put away, and her horse saddled. She rode

forth alone, and in the direction of the mountain cavern, where, on a former occasion, she had met her ally, Querecos.

The "pocket" in the rock had more than once been the place of rendezvous, and of deposit for letters when there was urgent necessity for news to be conveyed, or for a consultation to be held.

Olivia took a pole that was leaning against a tree at the mouth of the cavern, fastened her white handkerchief to its end, and held it up as high as she could reach, till, having climbed to the summit of the rock, she fastened it in a groove prepared for a staff. It was her method of summoning her friend, when he was in the neighborhood, to an immediate conference.

She had not waited an hour before he came. She told him all that had occurred, and of the strange proposition and threats of the half-breed, who claimed to know so much concerning them.

In half an hour afterward she was on her way home. Louise, who had seen her go out, evidently disturbed, was surprised to see how smiling and satisfied she looked on her return.

Ulric called the next day, according to appointment, certain of his preference in her service. He was shown into the library, where he was joined by a dark young man, a Spaniard by his complexion, who spoke English imperfectly. He announced himself as Pedro—one of Mrs. Sloman's household—who had special charge of her horses and the storehouse of grain. He was commissioned, he said, to inform Mr. Ulric Boyce that he was engaged in the lady's service, and was to receive instructions from him in the studies of steward, or superintendent of the farm workmen. Would he walk over the outbuildings with him?

Ulric was quite willing. He did not like the looks of his companion, however, and put many questions to him, which were answered with seeming frankness.

When they had finished their survey, they went to dinner in the spacious kitchen.

The new bailiff did not like the idea of sitting down, it might be, with the herdsmen and servants; he aspired to the table at which the mistress dined. But on this special occasion he excused ceremony, as his appetite was sharpened by a long walk. The cold sirloin venison and potatoes, washed down with sparkling cider, had full justice.

After dinner Pedro proposed a longer walk, in a different direction. He assumed a confidential air, and said he had Mrs. Sloman's permission to enlist the services of any man of sufficient intelligence who was attached to the household, in a bit of work for one of her friends. Some heavy ingots of silver were to be carried that night down the river, and put aboard a vessel, to be conveyed to San Francisco.

It was important that no one should know of the transportation of the bars; they would be robbed to a certainty; yet the deposit must be moved that night. Would he undertake to assist him in the job?

Ulric hesitated. It was a troublesome piece of work, he objected; extra, too. He should be well paid for it.

Pedro assured him he should be. Would he do it for two bars out of every twenty?

Ulric's eyes sparkled. "And if I loaded myself, who would help me pull the boat?"

Pedro promised that he would.

The bargain was struck. Ulric went with the man to a loft, where he unlocked a deep chest. The gleam of the silver seemed dazzling. It did not take him long to stow them between the lining and the cloth of his vest, where he secured them firmly with twine, then put on the vest. There was no fear of discovery by prowling marauders.

It was after dusk when they entered the boat. Pedro took both the oars. Ulric seated himself in the stern, and watched him. They shot down the stream rapidly.

A waking dream enthralled the half-breed's fancy. He saw how his knowledge of the schemes of the lady he served could soon give him an ascendancy over her, and secure his success.

As he leaned over the side of the small boat, watching the ripples made in their progress, the thought entered his brain of securing to himself all the silver both he and Pedro were carrying. If he could quietly rid himself of his companion! Why not?

The night was dark; they were alone; the opportunity was tempting.

Yielding to a sudden impulse, he crept nearer and nearer to the seat where the rower sat, apparently intent on observing their course. He did not see that he himself was watched.

Suddenly something brushed his head. Ulric's cap fell into the water.

"Hold on!" he shouted. "My cap is gone!"

"I will reach it, sir," said Pedro, respectfully. By the faint light they could see it was not far from the boat.

"A pull or two! Stay—this way!" the man continued, and presently it was within reach. Ulric leaned far over to clutch it.

All at once, as if by accident, the boat was bent over till one side lay in the water. Ulric lost his balance and fell overboard.

He had no time to cry out. The weight of the metal about him carried him down like lead. At the same time the boat righted, and shot off like an arrow under vigorous strokes of the oars.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CASTLE CAPTIVE.

HELEN was seated at her chamber window in the house of the *alcaldes*, Mr. Bond, wrapped in sad thoughts. She felt herself utterly helpless in the midst of calamities. Her gloomy reverie was interrupted by Mrs. Leath, the housekeeper, who informed her that a gentleman was waiting in the parlor to see her.

leaves and sending them down in a shower, had a lulling melody.

The young man spread his cloak on the ground, for the girl, and took down a basket fastened to his saddle-girth, which contained a store of sandwiches and wheaten biscuits, with a bottle of wine. A merry meal it was, enlivened by the gay spirits of youth, health and contentment, with the delicious exhilaration of unspoken love. Yes! the two young hearts beat warmly for each other, though one was as yet unconscious of the cause of a deep happiness never felt before.

Much invigorated by the rest, Helen was assisted to her saddle; Walter sprang to his, and their journey was resumed.

The country grew wilder as they passed on, yet it was exceedingly picturesque. Helen had never so enjoyed a ride. When they reached an elevation, she sportively proposed a race for the next mile or so.

Without responding to her challenge, the young man raised his hand to stop her from touching her horse to urge him forward. Then he pressed close to her side, and whispered: "Keep quiet, and do not be frightened. There are horsemen ahead, and I think they are the same we saw last evening."

Some distance before them, a party seemed to issue from the wood. There were four or five mounted men, and they came at pretty good speed toward them. Helen trembled violently, and caught Walter's arm. Both drew their horses a little out of the road to let the new-comers pass.

Shouting and laughing, they came briskly on. One of them, with a sweeping bow, so low as to show it was in mockery, lifted his cap to Helen, and she recognized him for the Mexican who had spoken to her on the *azotea*. Her breath fairly stopped with fear, till after they had passed.

She uttered an exclamation of joy that the danger was over, and turned to her companion to ask if they should ride on.

Just then came the report of a pistol, and Walter staggered in his seat, and clutched at the rein convulsively.

The girl screamed loudly in her terror. "It is nothing!" said Walter; "the bullet grazed my head; that is all. Ride on, Helen; I will go back to deal with this miscreant."

He wheeled his horse round, and dashed toward one of the horsemen, who he saw was preparing to fire on him again.

In a moment they were engaged in a close and deadly conflict. The youth drew his revolver and struck the lifted weapon out of his cowardly assailant's hand. The man retreated, and Walter rode after him, calling to him to stand and fight if he were not a pitiful coward.

Helen's horse, startled at the report, had sprung forward, and her utmost strength was insufficient to restrain him, or to turn his course. He flew onward like the wind. The poor girl lost all presence of mind, and could only cling convulsively to the saddle to save herself from being thrown to the ground.

Suddenly a powerful hand caught the bridle and instantly checked the animal, bringing him on his haunches. The girl was swung from her seat, but was caught in some one's arms and held forcibly, while she felt the horse under her spring forward in swift and headlong flight.

The shock and the rapid motion dizzied her; she could not utter a cry; she closed her eyes, almost swooning, and only the swift rush of air kept her from losing her senses.

Some one had saved her from being thrown, and was carrying her on. She could not see; so closely was she held to the rider's breast. Presently he lifted her to a seat on the pommel of his saddle, still keeping his arm round her.

"Walter! Mr. Ormsley!" she cried, and struggled to free herself, or to lift up her head. "Be still," whispered the man who held her. "You are safe enough."

"But Walter! Where is he?" "Just behind us. He is safe, too," answered the rider, urging his horse onward.

Helen closed her eyes. She was utterly bewildered.

Then she knew they had turned in another direction. The air blew chill upon her. Again she strove to lift her head.

"Who are you?" she cried. "All right; you are going on. Your friend is following us. Keep still, or you will fall and hurt yourself."

"I want to see Walter."

"You will place him in danger as well as yourself, if you make a noise," whispered the voice. "You shall see him when we come to a safe stopping place."

The girl comprehended that both had been saved from some danger. It must have been from the horsemen, one of whom had fired on him. She shuddered, but she could do nothing. She was held so she could not look into her captor's face.

The air grew more chill. At length she managed to turn her head a little and pull the scarf from her face, so that she could see where they were going.

A broad lake lay before them! "Where are we?" she cried, affrighted. "This is not our way! This is wrong. Why have you brought me here?"

"The man made no answer. Then she heard the trampling of several horses close to them, and a new fear seized her.

"Let me go! Put me down!" she shrieked. And she struggled wildly for release.

The horses swept around the curve of a road, and she saw a gloomy-looking stone building, that stood just on the borders of the water. Lofly, dark and frowning, it loomed on the sight like a prison; its walls gray and grimy with age; its stones green with damp vegetation.

The rider still held the girl fast, though she had slipped from her seat, and her feet hung down. Then the horse was stopped, and a cloak was flung over her head.

Someone lifted her down, and she felt herself carried by two persons. She could neither see nor speak. She felt by the closeness of the air that she was taken into the building.

She was placed on a seat, and her captors retired. She heard the door shut after them. Then she tore the cloak from her head, and stood up.

She was in a spacious room, wainscoted, and dark with age. The furniture was heavy and covered with dust. There was a table with several chairs and two sofas, covered with soiled leather. The floor was bare, except a small, square bit of carpet in the center of the apartment.

Helen rushed to the windows. They were glazed and covered with dust. She could only see the outline of woods at a distance. The door was locked.

Then the poor girl knew that she had been waylaid by enemies and carried off from her companion and protector. The men who had passed them must have had a deliberate purpose to capture her, and perhaps to kill him!

The thought was like a dagger plunged into her heart. Walter slain for her sake! She burst into passionate shrieks of anguish. These were succeeded by sobs that seemed to rend her bosom. Exhausted at length, she sunk on the floor, and wished and prayed that she might die.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 155.)

TO A FRIEND.

BY MATTHEW D. BRITTS.

You tell me they call me a poet,
And say that my gift is divine;
Indeed if I am, I don't know it—
I've little to do with "the Nine."
If I sing it is only for pleasure,
And the words merely happen to rhyme;
I don't care for time or for measure,
I don't know a thing about time!
But when I am shadowed with sadness,
My soul finds a solace in song,
And when sorrow turned into gladness,
The strains of themselves, flow along.
And so if you call me a poet,
(I'm sure that I'd like to be one),
But indeed if I am I don't know it—
For I only keep singing for fun.

Rocky Mountain Rob, THE CALIFORNIA OUTLAW; OR, The Vigilantes of Humberg Bar.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "THE WOLF DEMON," "OVERLAND KIT,"
"RED MAZEP," "AGE OF STARS," "HEART
OF FIRE," "WITCHES OF NEW YORK,"
"A STRANGE GIFT," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CHINESE CAMP.

THE CHINESE CAMP was situated up the Wisdom river, some three miles from Humberg Bar. The Camp had, originally, been known as "Murphy's Strike," and at one time bid fair to be the richest "lead" struck in Montana for years. But, to the astonishment of Murphy and his partners—about a dozen were with Murphy—the "pay-dirt" suddenly "petered" out, and in a short time the mine ceased to pay its running expenses.

Then Mr. Murphy and his crowd "got up and dusted," to describe the operation they performed in mining parlance, and the mine was left to take care of itself; until, at last, a crowd of almond-eyed Celestials took possession of the deserted Camp, and, as is usually the case, succeeded in extracting sufficient gold from the ore to pay them for working the mine.

Thirty days after they had taken possession, "Murphy's Strike" was among the things of the past, and the "Chinese Camp" took its place.

Naturally, the fact that the "heaven Chinese" had succeeded in making a "pay" that the pure-blooded native Americans (from the cave of Cork) had "slipped up on"—mining parlance again—was not altogether agreeable to the neighboring miners as a general thing, and more than one rough-bearded, red-shirted fellow, elegantly perfumed (whisky and plug tobacco commingled) had suggested that "the durned heathens ought to be cleaned out," but the better portion of the community had frowned down the idea.

But, the moment the fact that the Celestials had started a bank at the Chinese Camp was generally known, the way the hardy miners, the moment the day's toil was done, started for that bank was a caution.

One and all declared that it was a disgrace to the valley for the heathens to run a bank, and they'd bust it or perish in the attempt.

It was the old legend that the emigrant painted upon his wagon-cover, "Pike's Peak or bust!" and like that unfortunate "pilgrim," on their return, a single word told the story—"Busted!"

The bank had only run three nights, but the current of luck had been steadfast to the fortunes of the Celestials. Many a swaggering miner had carried a little buck-skin bag, swelled with yellow dust almost to bursting, into the Chinese shanty, and an hour or so afterward, had retired with that buck-skin bag so lean and thin that the contents wouldn't have bought a box of caps.

Doc Kidder hummed an operatic air to himself as he walked, with a light, springy step, up the bank of the river toward the Chinese Camp. Kidder was wonderfully young for a man of his age; time had dealt lightly with him; he never got excited, and an even temper is a wonderful preventative against age.

As he walked on, his mind continually reverted to the fortune-teller. That young woman had made a most decided impression upon the cold, passionless gambler.

Kidder was just a little given to superstition though, and that fact fully accounted for the impression that the words of the oracle of fortune had made upon him.

But Kidder had fully made up his mind to test the truth of the fortune-teller's warning by "going" for the monte bank.

The Chinese Camp consisted of one large shanty, one small one and three caves, hollowed out in the side of the hill wherein the mine was located. Twenty mild-faced, almond-eyed Chinamen composed the inhabitants of the place.

In the large shanty the monte bank was located. As Kidder approached, he met Johnny Bird coming from the shanty.

Kidder noticed that the "gay young rooster" from the Geyser Spring "did not look as cheerful and as light-hearted as usual."

"What luck, Johnny?" Kidder asked. "They've busted me, Doc, for sure," Johnny replied.

"Anybody winning?" "Nary time," responded Johnny, tersely. "I tell yer, it's a grizzly, claws and all! If you don't believe me, jest go in and try. I jest take my head and bile it for a cabbage!" And then Johnny went on in the darkness.

Kidder entered the shanty. The game was going on briskly as he appeared upon the scene. Two flour barrels, supporting a broken door, served for a table. Upon it the lay-out was spread.

There was quite a number present representing the Bar, and to their credit, be it said, they were losing their gold-dust freely, and with an off-hand and reckless manner.

As Kidder afterward expressed it, it did him good to "see the boys from the Bar keep their end up so well, and sock down their gold-dust in so keeless a way as to make the sharps from Get-up Gulch and Poor-shoot City turn pale with envy."

"It's fire and fall back," said a big fellow, in a blue flannel shirt, to Kidder, as he retired from the game, broke.

Nothing daunted, Kidder went at it. There was a yell of salutation from the "boys" as Kidder "tackled" the "animal!"

Doc was well known for forty miles around, and as he was reputed to be one of the luckiest men that ever tempted fortune at a game of cards in the Wisdom valley, there was a general exclamation of delight when he went into the game.

The fact was, the "boys" were a good deal puzzled at the way things had been running at Chinese Camp. Either there was cheating round the board, or the Celestials were having such enormous runs of luck. Of course, if any cheating had been discovered, the settlement of Chinese Camp would have been cleaned out in

"two jumps of a flea!" as Jim Turner—one of the prominent men for Get-up Gulch—had remarked. But the closest watch had not been able to detect a sign of foul play as yet. But, when Kidder "squared himself and bucked the bank," lively times were anticipated.

"How y' do, John?" Kidder said, as he tossed a silver-piece on the board. "How y', Mellican man?" the Celestial replied, with a smile that was calm and gentle, and then, in a minute more, he raked in Kidder's dollar.

It was only a dollar, but the spirits of the "boys" from Humberg Bar went down below zero. They had confidently expected to see Kidder beat the bank from the jump; and then, too, the fellows from the "Gulch" and the "City" indulged in scornful remarks regarding the "pride" of the Bar, and were only silenced by Kidder observing, quietly, "that if any gentleman in the room thought that he could flax him in a little game of draw-poker, he was his man, and that it took money to buy land." And, as the sarcastic gentlemen were clean broke—the Chinese monte-dealer had taken their money, so that they wouldn't lose it on their way home—they couldn't accept Kidder's bold defiance.

After losing his stake, Kidder remained quiet and watched the game for a short time.

The stakes offered were very low; the miners began to get the idea into their heads that the board was bewitched, and that a white man's money wouldn't stand "no chance, nowhow."

The Chinese dealer sat blandly impassive. "S'pose Mellican man plays, he win all the time," he said, cooing, softly, like an enraptured turtle-dove.

Suddenly Kidder, who had stepped back a pace among the crowd, again advanced to the table.

"Let's play for enough to be interesting," he said, and he tossed a buck-skin bag full of gold-dust down on the board. "What's the use of fooling gentlemen?" he added. "We might as well go it while we're young. Just weigh that, John, and then go ahead with your bird's eggging; and, as I want to make the game interesting, I'll take a side bet of three to two from any gentleman in the room that I lose!"

There was a moment of silence. Kidder's cool offer astonished the gamblers. The bank had been winning almost constantly for four successive nights, and yet, so strong was the prestige of Kidder's luck, that not one in the room dared to bet him three to two that he would lose.

The little eyes of the Chinaman who was dealing glittered as the solid buck-skin bag bounced down upon the table.

He had raked in Kidder's dollar, and he doubted not that the gold-dust would follow.

One of the assistants of the dealer weighed the dust.

"Five ounces, Mellican man," "Spread yourself, John, and wade in!" Kidder cried.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE MONTE BANK.

ALL within the shanty crowded nearer to the table, and the busy hum of conversation was entirely suspended as the Chinaman dealt.

Forth came the cards. Then a long-drawn breath and then a yell. Kidder had won.

The face of the Chinese dealer turned a sickly yellow as he looked at the faces of the cards, and then surveyed the dirty yellow bag that now seemed to his vision to be almost as big as a flour sack.

Slowly the assistant weighed out the five ounces of gold-dust and transferred them to Kidder. It was a heavy amount for the bank to lose at one stake.

Then Kidder again retired from the table and amused himself by looking on at the game for a while.

The "boys" from the Bar were jubilant, while the "sharps" from the "Gulch" and "City" hadn't a word to say for themselves.

Then Kidder stepped forward again and put his dust down on the board; this time both bags, making ten ounces in all.

This was serious business. The dealer looked fairly pale.

He said a few words in his native tongue to his assistant, and he at once proceeded to weigh the dust belonging to the bank.

It was evident that the dealer hesitated to accept so large a stake.

"I'm right after you, John," Kidder said, with his icy smile.

The dealer tried to smile in return, but the effort was a failure.

The assistant weighed the dust and reported the amount to the dealer, who was evidently the head of the concern. Then the two held quiet conversation in their native tongue.

Kidder, with his usual quiet smile, watched them closely.

Finally the dealer turned his attention to the game again.

"Allee right, playee Mellican man ten ounces," Kidder looked the Chinaman straight in the eye for a moment, then he leaned over the table and shook his fingers impressively in the face of the dealer.

"I want a square deal, John, or there'll be trouble in the Camp," Kidder said, in his cool, quiet way.

The dealer was strangely affected; his little eyes rolled imploringly in his head, and his face became almost white. He wasn't one-half as cool as the practiced gamster whose ten ounces lay on the board.

If the game went against him the bank was broke, while to Kidder it was only an everyday occurrence.

Me playee fair, allee time," the dealer said, earnestly. And if the Celestial had glanced around him at the bearded faces of the men by whom he was surrounded, he could easily have told that he could expect but little mercy at their hands if he was detected in any foul play.

"Now go ahead, John; give us a deal, for I want to get back to the Bar before it gets late."

With trembling hands the dealer manipulated the papers.

It was only a moment of suspense, and then a torrent of oaths came from the lips of the miners.

The bank had won!

"Allee playee fair," the dealer said, earnestly. He did not offer to remove the stakes, but looked into Kidder's face to see if he was perfectly satisfied.

"That's all square, John; rake 'em in!" Kidder said, pleasantly, rolling a cigarette between his thumb and finger. "Any gentleman got a match?"

And Jim Turner, the bitter enemy of the Bar and all its inhabitants, as a good citizen of Get-up Gulch ought to be, stepped forward, completely overcome by the magnificent exhibition of coolness on the part of Kidder, and not only tendered him a match, but offered, if Kidder was going to the Bar, to walk along a bit with him.

So Kidder bid the dealer a kind "good-night," said that he should make it a point to go for him again, and, arm in arm with Turner, left the shanty.

The backers of the monte bank breathed easier when Kidder departed.

And while Doc Kidder was so boldly trying to out the claws of the "tiger," there was another little scene transpiring in a corner of the shanty.

As the crowd gathered in to the table, to watch the issue of Kidder's bold defiance, two men were brought face to face. One started in surprise, while the other did not seem to notice the first at all.

The crowd swayed in, crowding round the game, and the two men were separated.

The first, who had seemed so agitated at the sight of the other, was joined by two more men. The three were Jim York, Kangaroo, and Rackensack.

"I've seen him!" cried York, hurriedly, as the two others came up to him.

"Who?" Kangaroo asked in astonishment.

"Dick Talbot!"

The name he uttered affected the other two men fully as much as York's meeting Talbot face to face.

"The devil!" Kangaroo growled in anger. "I thought the cuss was dead," Rackensack observed.

"I had hoped so," York said, his brow gloomy, and his face furrowed by the lines of thought.

"He must have as many lives as a cat," Kangaroo added.

"I can not understand it," York muttered, thoughtfully.

"Understand what?" asked Rackensack, overhearing the muttered words of the other.

"Why, how this man lives," he replied.

"Let us waylay him as he leaves the Camp to-night, and knock him in the head," Kangaroo suggested.

"That will be our best course," York replied, "if we can only succeed in doing so."

"Oh, that will be easy enough!" Rackensack cried, confidently.

"It may not be as easy as you think," York thought.

"Why, do you think that he recognized you?" Kangaroo asked, anxiously.

"No; I do not think that he did," York replied. "I have changed a great deal since he has seen me. He did not seem to notice me at all."

"Where is he, anyway?" Rackensack asked. "Yonder, back is to us now."

The three had drawn out of the crowd, and were apart from all the others in the room, in one corner of the shanty.

"Next to the Indian?" Rackensack asked, as he looked in the direction indicated.

"Yes."

And then, to the astonishment of the three, they saw that Talbot and the Indian were evidently companions.

"That knocks our little game in the head," Kangaroo observed; "he and the red-skin are side-partners. We might flax out one man, two on 'em would be mighty apt to trouble us."

"Them Injuns fight like blazes, sometimes, too," Rackensack remarked.

"We'll attend to our other work, first, and then fix him," York observed, and his brow was dark and gloomy as he looked upon his foe.

"Twice he has escaped me, but the third time, I'll swear, I'll have him. He's had the devil's own luck so far."

Just at that moment the deal which cost Kidder his ten ounces was dealt, and the crowd spread out from the table.

York laid his hands upon the arms of his two companions.

"Come, let us get out," he said. "Never mind this fellow to-night. We'll get a whack at him before we are many days older."

Then the three took advantage of the confusion attending Kidder's withdrawal to leave the shanty.

But York, keen-eyed as he was, had calculated wrongly.

He had both seen and recognized him, and though he had not seemed to watch York, yet he had watched the door, and saw the departure of the three.

"Come," he said to the Indian, who was the Blackfoot chief, Mud Turtle.

"Where go?" asked the chief.

"You remember Barrel Camp?"

The savage granted.

"Jim York, Rackensack, and Kangaroo are here."

The Indian significantly laid his hand upon the handle of his scalping-knife.

"Wait! that will come in time," Talbot said. Another moment and they stood beneath the stars.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE NIGHT TRAIL.

The moon was coming slowly up, and by its dim light Talbot and the Indian could discern the dark figures of the three men standing together, apparently conversing, close by the bank of the river.

The shanty watchers remained in the shadow of the shanty, thus eluding observation.

For about five minutes the three stood motionless, then they separated; one went down the trail toward the Bar, while the other two struck off northward toward the mountains.

By the dim, uncertain light it was a difficult matter to recognize any one of the three; but Talbot guessed that York was one of the two who had gone northward. He could only judge by the outline of the dark figure, but the single man who had gone to the south, seemed to be shorter and stouter than York.

"I have an idea that we are on the right track," he said, hurriedly, to the Indian. "We must not lose sight of these fellows until we track them to their lairs."

"Mud Turtle know, good," said the Indian, laconically.

"You follow the fellow down the river, and I'll track the other two. They have gone toward the hills. I'll stake five to one that they are bound for the cavern of the road-agents."

"Me think so too, heap," said the chief.

"Off with you, then; I'll see you in the morning at the Waterproof, if we do not run across each other before."

Then Talbot left the shadow of the Chinaman's shanty, and struck upon the trail of the two who had gone northward, while the Indian, gliding noiselessly through the darkness, tracked the single man who had followed the path down the river.

It was no easy task that the two had taken upon themselves, when they set out to play the spy upon Jim York and his companions.

The light of the moon was growing stronger and stronger, as it mounted higher and higher in the dark-blue sky. All conspired to aid the men who were tracked, and to baffle the trackers.

Talbot moved with extreme caution. When he quitted the shadow of the shanty he was compelled to pass across a little open space which afforded no means of concealment, but, once over it and on the other side, he took advantage of every boulder and tree and clump of bushes to mask his pursuit.

But, in spite of all his caution, he could not move onward with the eagle tread of the moose-hoofed Indian, who glided forward, stealing from rock to bush, and from bush to tree, more like some unquiet ghost than one of mortal flesh.

The heavy soles of Talbot's boots would rasp now and then upon the jagged rocks, whose

rough edges cropped forth out of the virgin soil; the bush would fly back when released from the pressure of his form.

The two men whose footsteps Talbot was tracking with all the zeal of the blood-hound, went on at first carelessly and without caution. The echoes of their steps rang out clear and full upon the mountain air; but, as they followed the little trail which wound deeper and deeper into the wilderness, they proceeded more carefully. The sound of their footsteps—Talbot's only guide, for he did not dare approach near enough to distinguish their figures—grew fainter and fainter.

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"Who are you?"

"My name is Zerline Nance."

"Then I do not know you."

"But I have business with you."

"Well?"

"Would you like to know who poisoned Florose Earncliffe?"

"Ha!"

"Ah! you will listen now?"

"How do you know that she was poisoned?"

"Some other time I will tell you. We have mutual interests, Dwyer Allison; or, at least, they can be made so. I have a deep wrong to avenge—so have you. My enemy is a man—yours is a woman. If you will take my task, I will take yours; it will be man to man, and woman to woman. You loved Florose Earncliffe. If I show you her poisoner, and yearn to hunt that poisoner with threatening of justice, will you swear to act the same toward the murderer of my husband?"

"Woman—"

"Be quick, sir! Is it a bargain?"

"It is! I will swear to aid you in my vengeance of your own, if you can prove to me that Florose was poisoned, and show me—"

"Enough. You are a man of honor, and I take our compact as sealed. The murderer of Florose Earncliffe lives there!" She pointed to the house of Helene Cerey.

"What?"

"It is true—and I will prove it. Helene Cerey is the murderer of your betrothed. Now, come with me. I will tell you more of myself. You see this?—it was done by the dagger that destroyed the life of my husband!"

Dwyer Allison, almost involuntarily, went with her. He yielded to an inexplicable promptness.

And as they moved away, and she uttered the closing words of her speech, she threw aside a portion of her hood—discovering a red, frightful gash across the neck, that told of a fierce knife-cut.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ARREST.

"MALEDICTION!"

The exclamation was a growl, deeply deep; the voice was that of Cortez Mendoza.

The young Spaniard was hurrying along Perdido street, having just left the American Theater.

Exactly two weeks had passed since Cortez escaped the claws of the beautiful tigress—since Helene's whispered conversation with her ruffian tool, in the tapestried room—since Dwyer Allison's rejection of the passionate beauty's love, and his encounter with the mysterious figure—who called herself Zerline Nance—on the pavement before Helene's house.

The night was a dark one, with gustful wind and murky atmosphere. Banks of clouds rolled heavily across the sky; and occasionally the moon, which struggled behind its watery shroud, would break the gloomy air by darting a momentary gleam between the mist-ribs.

Cortez Mendoza was walking fast, to reach his home before the fall of the rain.

Behind him, shadowy, spectral, ghostly, came a tall form, dogging at his heels—a man who seemed determined to keep him in sight, and whose persistency called forth the exclamation:

"Malediction!"

It was not the simple fact of his being followed on this occasion that made young Cortez growl. For ten days, he had noticed that, wherever he went, there was a tall man in pursuit of him—always at a certain distance, always watching him; and while it annoyed him, it made him angry.

At one time, this individual who haunted him was in the character of a fruit-vender; next it was in the garb of a common laborer; then in the dress of a fashionable Englishman; finally—and on this night—a Spanish dandy, with curling mustache, browned features, and piercing eyes.

But Cortez knew the form, in any guise. He knew that this party was keeping him under surveillance. He had sat near him at the theater; he had elbowed close, in the crowd, after the performance.

Now, as he strode along Perdido street, he chanced to glance over his shoulder, and perceived, immediately, that the tall figure was there, timing his footsteps, dogging him as usual; and he blurted, snarlingly:

"Malediction! Who is this? What is he after? I am tired of his presence! I must be rid of him, for he makes me nervous. *Caramba!*—you owl. I'll teach you some manners." With the words, he glided suddenly into a black alley, and stood close to the wall, waiting the other's approach.

And while he waited, he drew a knife from his bosom.

The tall form came on at increased speed, fearing he had lost the object of pursuit. As he wheeled around the corner of the alley, the hand of Cortez Mendoza clutched his throat.

"*Caramba!* you dog. Now I have you!"

Not another word passed.

A fierce struggle ensued.

The bright blade of the knife circled in the air; there was a low groan, and a body sunk down in the darkness.

"God help me!" was all the tall form uttered.

"New then! Malediction!"

Cortez, with a grim smile, continued on his way, gritting his teeth in satisfaction.

Soon he reached his father's shop.

Entering by the side passage, he found old Carlos in the rear room.

But he paused and looked in astonishment.

The Quack was walking to and fro, muttering, moaning; and at sight of his son, he uttered a sharp, whining cry that was enigmatical.

"My boy! my boy! Oh! oh!"

"What's the matter, old man?"

"Oh, Cortez! my dear Cortez! We are ruined!"

"Ruined? *Caramba!* what do you mean by that?"

"Fly! Fly for your life! We are ruined!—ruined! O-h!"

"Fly! What has happened? Malediction! I was just thinking of doing that. I have killed a man to-night—a foot that has been tripping after me, like a shadow, for ten days past. As we struggled, one of my fingers ginged in my mouth, and I wrenched off this ring with my teeth," and he tossed a ring on the table, as he spoke.

Carlos did not take any notice of the ring. And Cortez repeated:

"Tell me what has happened?"

"Oh! oh! we are lost—you are lost! Read that, Cortez!"

He handed his son a letter-sheet, and as Cortez viewed it, he muttered, half aloud, in some curiosity:

"What's this? Who can be writing letters that throw the old man into fits, and make his tongue wag like a fool's? And they use green ink. Ho! that's odd—green ink. Now, what do they say?"

But he interrupted himself by venting a half-howl. The note was for Cortez Mendoza, and it ran as follows:

ocean, or north, or south; but the curse of your deeds shall follow you swiftly, and the Green Shadow will hunt you to the grave!"

"Malediction!" he roared. "What is the 'Green Shadow'?—here is green ink! Where did you get this?" turning to his excited father.

"I came in an hour ago, and as I came in, I passed a man on the pavement, who wore a green mask over his features—a very small man."

"A small man?" echoed Cortez Mendoza, staring.

"Entering this room, I found the note there, on the table, lying open. Fly, Cortez!—fly! All is lost!—we are ruined!"

"Luck of Perdition!—I will fly! I have no time to lose! What I feared has happened. The law is after me—and I am an innocent man! *Caramba!*"

He turned to rush out at the door; when that door flew open, and he was confronted by three stern-faced men.

He halted and gaped, with starting eyes.

Old Carlos fairly yelled in dismay.

"We are lost! we are lost!" screamed the Quack.

"Malediction! Silence, old man," and, to the comers: "What do you want here?"

"We want Cortez Mendoza," answered the foremost, exhibiting a pair of handcuffs.

"Ho! you want me? For what, now?"

"Oh! Oh!" groaned Carlos, who saw that the intruders were of the police force.

"We want Cortez Mendoza, on the charge of murder."

"Murder!"

"The abduction and murder of Carline Mandoro."

"It's a lie!" shrieked Carlos.

"Furies devour Carline Mandoro!" bellowed Cortez.

"Come!"

"I am innocent! If you want me—then take me!"

He whipped out his knife, and made a desperate plunge forward.

But, the three men quickly disarmed him, and slipped the "bracelets" on his wrists.

"You shall sweat for this!—dogs!" he hissed, as they held him firmly; and the threat issued venomously from between the teeth he gnashed in his rage.

Old Carlos was completely overcome. He sunk into a chair, rocked his shriveled body backward and forward, moaned wailfully, and cried aloud his son's innocence.

"Bear up there, old man!" snarled Cortez.

"Malediction! You are making an ass of yourself! I did not kill, nor touch at all, this Carline Mandoro—curse her! And I will prove it!"

They forced the prisoner away, and left old Carlos bewailing the unlucky situation.

"Master, did you see this ring?"

The Quack started, for he thought he was alone.

Farak, the negro, was standing beside him, holding and examining the ring which Cortez had thrown on the table.

"No!" he snapped; "nor do I care to see it at all."

"There is a name in it," said the negro.

"Curse the name!—curse the name! But, what is it?"

"Dwyer Allison."

"Ho! the man Cortez says he killed! The lover of the dead Florose! But—*caramba!*—I don't care for that. Oh! Oh! they've taken my Cortez—my dear boy! They will hang him! How sad to see him with a rope around his neck! O-h! Farak—Farak—what an ungrateful world!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TIGRESS AGAIN.

BUT, Cortez Mendoza was too sanguine. Moreover, he did not know that he was the victim of a well-laid plot to encompass his destruction.

And the movers in the plot worked admirably in concert, as will be seen.

We have heard Cortez Mendoza declare that he did not kill Wart Gomez, and that he did not touch Carline Mandoro—or Carline Gomez—in any way.

Whether it was or was not Cortez who entered the house of Gomez, and perpetrated the bloody deed at all events, he was soon compelled to realize that he was in a fearful predicament.

At a preliminary trial, two days after his imprisonment, he was overwhelmed with astonishment when a rough, uncouth, bristling-bearded man took the stand, and gave the following testimony:

"I know Cortez Mendoza well—"

"Liar! We never met before!" shouted Cortez.

"I know that he once had a sweetheart, whose name was Carline Mandoro. She deserted him, and married a man named Wart Gomez—the man who was murdered the very night of the abduction and murder of his wife, this Carline. Cortez Mendoza, mad and wild, swore to wreak vengeance on Carline Mandoro, for her faithlessness."

"How do you know he swore this?" was the immediate question put to the witness.

"I heard him—"

"Liar again!" interrupted Cortez, red with rage, and lost in amazement.

"Where did you hear him swear it?—under what circumstances?"

"At a wine-shop," replied the witness. "He was in liquor, and boasted to some of his companions that Carline Mandoro—he called her Carline Mandoro, though her name, then, was Carline Gomez—had once been his sweetheart."

"There was a faint buzz among lookers-on. Several were present who had, themselves, heard Cortez Mendoza say that."

But, just then, no one reflected that it might be possible this witness only repeated what he had read in the newspapers, which, recently, contained a full account of the affair between one Cortez Mendoza and one Wart Gomez.

"But, you said he swore to wreak vengeance on Carline Mandoro—or, Carline Gomez, as she then was."

"That was afterward, when he turned away from his companions. He said it in an undertone—but, I heard him."

"The man lies!" broke in Cortez, foaming with passion. "I did not swear, nor think of wreaking vengeance on Carline Mandoro—or Carline Gomez, as she then was, nor upon anybody else. All lies!—black lies! Malediction!"

"The prisoner will remain quiet!" thundered the official. "Now, witness, what more?"

"No more that I can remember."

"Recollect you are giving this valuable evidence under solemn oath!"

The man raised the Bible to his lips, as he had done when he took the stand.

"He is a perjurer!" exclaimed the Spaniard. The second witness was called, duly sworn, and testified as follows:

"Know Cortez Mendoza well—"

"Another liar! *Caramba!*" sounded boisterously from the box.

Cortez would not be quieted.

"Saw Cortez Mendoza at a gambling den, in the early evening of the night on which Carline Gomez disappeared. He was conversing with a

villainous-looking fellow, who wore a slouch hat, had a bad name, and was known to carry a dagger. Heard one say: 'If Carline Mandoro interferes too much, I will give her the knife! Could not see which one used the words, but believe the voice was that of Cortez Mendoza.'"

"Malediction!" thought Cortez, "they are weaving a web of blood around me! I shall swing if this goes on! *Caramba!*"

"Where is the party who received at the hands of the Chief of Police a warrant for the arrest of Cortez Mendoza?"

"Present," answered a prompt voice.

There was a slight stir near the door, and a young man came forward.

He was dressed fashionably; had short hair that curled in crisp ringlets over an uncommonly pale brow. His eyes were dark and flashing; his lips were ripe and red as a woman's; and he twined as if from habit, the ends of a silken mustache, which was, truly, the only masculine feature in his general appearance.

Cortez riveted his gaze upon him. There was something strangely familiar in the face—and when the youth spoke, the gazer started and seemed trying to recall to mind where he had heard the voice.

The name was Gerald Preston.

"You will state what you know about this case?"—after the due form and ceremony.

"I know this Mendoza well—"

"*Caramba!* what a horde of acquaintances," Cortez muttered, as he began to turn and squirm restlessly in his box.

"He has cheated me at cards, and cursed me when my pockets were empty—"

"Ho!" growled Cortez, to himself, "this is some popinjay who has lost money by me. He is spiteful, and delights to see me in this fix. He comes to swear that I am a villainous character, and just the man to be guilty of what I am accused. Malediction! I'll choke him for it when I am at liberty!"

The witness continuing:

"On the night of the abduction and murder of Carline Gomez, he had won heavily from me. I had debts to pay on the morrow, and not a penny in my purse. I followed him from the den to beg a loan."

"What was this?"

The data given by the answer corresponded with that mentioned by the witness who had just left the stand.

"Witness, proceed."

"I say I followed after him. I saw him enter a house—the house of Wart Gomez."

"Where is the house situated?" an interruption by an old lawyer who had been important to secure the defendant for a client.

"On Jackson street, not far from the New Orleans and Carrollton Railroad. The exact number I can not state."

"The witness will be subject to question in due time. The uninterrupted statement is what we want now."

"After seeing Cortez Mendoza enter the house of Wart Gomez," resumed this Gerald Preston, "I heard sounds that were unmistakably those of a deadly struggle within. Was about to rush to the aid of those beset, when Cortez Mendoza dashed out, bearing a limp form in his arms. I had a casual acquaintance with Wart Gomez; had seen his wife. Knew and recognized the limp form in the arms of Cortez Mendoza as Carline, the wife of Wart Gomez. By the light that streamed through the door, I saw that her face was covered with blood, that she was insensible—if not already dead. At sight of me, and before I could act, he struck me a terrible blow between the eyes. Before I recovered, he was gone."

"Malediction!" thought Cortez, who was now turning pale, "these liars and perjurers will hang me yet!"

Close cross-questioning elicited nothing further, and also failed to discover any flaw, contradiction, or inconsistencies in the testimony of the several witnesses.

The prisoner was remanded to a jail, to await a final trial.

But Cortez Mendoza was staring at the last witness, as if transfixed. Under the youth's effeminate mustache he fancied he detected a slightly sarcastic smile, and the dark eyes of this Gerald Preston turned on him, for a moment, with a glance of commingled hate and triumph that he had seen before—when held down on an ottoman sofa, with two ruffians approaching, ostensibly to take his life. And more: he now perceived that the two men who had testified against him were the identical villains who had sprung out of the secret apartments adjoining the tapestried room, when Helene Cerey uttered the signaling cry: "It is time! It is time!"

All this flashed into his mind with inconceivable rapidity, and he roared out:

"Hold, there! *Caramba!* this is a plot to destroy me. I see through it plainly! Fools that you are! That last witness is no man at all! Hear me—" but he was dragged away, and forced to be quiet, by a threat to gag him if he did not desist.

And Cortez Mendoza, behind his prison bars, stood, madly, pulling his hair, raving, cursing his ill-luck—cursing Helene Cerey; for he comprehended the plot of his situation at a glance.

"Malediction!" he howled. "She has failed to destroy me in one way, and now seeks another. But, how did she plan to accuse me of the murder of Carline Mandoro? Where did she get all her information?—half of which is false! She is a devil! She will make me swing! The tigress! I see it all!—I see! *Caramba!* How shall I fight her? It is all owing to that cursed Star of Diamonds. If I had not touched it, I would not now be here—in prison. Ho! in prison. Cortez Mendoza in prison! Think of it! Malediction! How am I to get out?"

CHAPTER XIX.

LOOSE ON THE TRAIL.

The self-apostrophized, unfortunate Mendoza had been in confinement very high two months. Imprisonment did not agree with him. He had lost color; his handsome face was pale and slightly haggard, and his eyes were bloodshot.

He had cursed the fates that placed him there, till his tongue tired with useless raving. He had bewailed his situation till he grew sick. He had thought upon the more than probability of these cunning enemies being able to send him to the gallows, with their lying and perjury, till his slumbers were disturbed and made hideous with nightmares, and he half felt the hangman's noose around his neck.

He was now sinking into a fierce apathy of despair; and this feeling was augmented by the fact that his father, the Quack, had not visited him since the night on which the three officers dragged him from the little room at the rear of the shop.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon of a clear day, when, in a spirit of utter dejection, he sat on the edge of his narrow bed in the prison cell.

His elbows were propped on his knees, his chin rested rigidly in his hands; and his eyes were distended in a vacant stare at the opposite wall, where a monstrous spider was sucking the blood from a fly that buzzed helplessly in the entanglements of the treacherous web.

For nearly two hours he had remained thus—statue-like, gazing blankly, with a half-scowl

knitting his brows. The last rays of the parting sun streamed in at the elevated window, shining weirdly on the dirty wall; and a silence, full of strangeness, reigned in the atmosphere.

Presently, a key turned in the lock of the door, and a visitor entered.

It was Farak, the negro. In one hand he carried a small, unique box; in the other he held a highly-colored envelope.

"Master?"

The voice, the presence of the negro, seemed to restore Cortez to much of his former self. He looked up, with a start.

"Ho! Farak, is it you?"

"I, master."

"And what brings you here? Do you not see?—I am in prison. They say I am a murderer."

"Yes, master, they say so—"

"But, I am an innocent man. Malediction!" he interrupted, quickly.

"I believe it, master."

"You believe it?"

"Yes."

"Good. It is true—I am innocent. What do you come here for, Farak?"

"For two reasons; first, this." He extended the note, and bowed respectfully.

"Ha! a letter. *Caramba!* I have received a dozen since I came into this hole—all written in green ink!—all containing the same words as that which I received on the night of my arrest. Now, who is this from?"

He opened and read the missive.

"Ho! I knew it. See this! Malediction! Hear, Farak!—the note says: 'Perhaps Cortez Mendoza will not wish to measure weapons with Helene Cerey again! Let me remind him that I have promised to become his wife, after fifteen years, or give him half my fortune! Is it not a pleasant theme for a man to dwell on, who will soon be hung, and thus lose so brilliant a prospect? I knew it! Helene Cerey was the Gerald Preston who testified, with lies, against me! Death catch her! She is a tigress, Farak! But, where did you get this?'"

"From a lady in a barouche, as I came in. You may see her this moment from the window if you look."

Cortez sprung upon the bed, and pressed his nose close to the bars.

He saw a barouche departing. In the barouche was a lady; she was looking up at the window; she saw him—she waved her handkerchief.

"Ha! *Caramba!* It is she! Oh! could I but catch her by the hair of her head! Malediction! Farak, she is a tigress! I could kill her!" and he danced up and down on the bed, gritting his teeth, swinging his arms, and seeming ready to dash through the air after the woman who taunted him.

"Perhaps you will be out of this some day, master," said Farak.

"Yes, yes, I will get out. And I will catch this Helene Cerey! I will pound her with a stick till she is black and blue, after I have made her marry me! She shall have no servants, and do all the housework herself! I will keep her busy. O-h! she shall work till her nails peel off! And I will abuse her! I will give her no rest! She shall sleep on pins, and wash in vinegar! I will paint her face with vitriol! Ha! ha! she shall howl with pain!—and I'll be worse and worse! Malediction! and while he jumped about, gesticulating, he chuckled savagely.

"After your trial, master—"

Cortez came to the floor with a bound.

"After my trial! Say that again, and I will gouge your eyes out! My trial? Malediction! I must be out of this before my trial! There is enough evidence to hang me, first by the neck, and then by the heels! I must get out! And you must aid me, Farak."

"All in my power, master," bowing again, humbly.

"You will aid me; I shall escape; and then we will watch this tigress, Helene Cerey! Now—what is this box?" he questioned, suddenly, and pointing to the box which Farak held.

"It is the Star of Diamonds."

"The Star of Diamonds?" Cortez shouted.

"*Caramba!* toss it out the window. It is the cause of all my trouble. Out!—but, stop: where did you get it?"

"I bring bad news, master. In explaining how I came by the box, I must tell of something for which I have shed tears."

"Bad news! Bad news for a man who is near being hanged! Ho!"

"Your father—"

"Ho!—that's it! Now, what has happened to the old man?"

"He died, three weeks ago, in a fit."

"Died in a fit?" exclaimed the Spaniard.

"Malediction! Well, I am sorry. But, he had lived long enough. You buried him decently, Farak?"

"Yes, master."

"And these dogs of jailers would not have let me know! *Caramba!*"

"When your father lay on his bed, just before the fit came on him, he called to Farak. He said he had something to send to you—"

"Good. How thoughtful! He sent me the Star of Diamonds to make more trouble. Malediction! But how did he get it from Helene Cerey?"

"It was stolen. The thief was stricken with a deadly fever—"

"Of course! Only wonder is he did not fall dead in his tracks, the moment he laid hands on it! *Caramba!* Well?"

"This thief sent for Carlos Mendoza, his friend. To him he gave the star—and your father, at his death, gave it to me, to give to you. He said it was valuable."

"Valuable?"

Cortez appeared to be thinking for a few moments. Then he said:

"On second thought, Farak, I will keep the star. Give it to me. I will hide it under the mattress. Let it make more trouble if it can."

Receiving the box from the negro, he added:

"Now, what else said the old man?"

"He also gave me this. He said you would understand."

"A diagram of the marks in the cellar," passed through the mind of Cortez, as he glanced over the parchment which Farak handed him.

"I see. Instructions how to find the money he has hidden. Good. *Caramba!* He must have a trunk full of eagles buried away! I will get out of jail; I will secure the money—and with the money I will wound after Helene Cerey. I will catch her! I will devour her by bites! Malediction!" Then aloud:

"Farak, you will help me to get out of here?"

"Cheerfully, master."

"And you will stick by me?"

"Yes, master; Farak will ever be your slave, though he is given his liberty in the will of Carlos Mendoza."

"Good. We will pursue and wreak vengeance on Helene Cerey, the tigress! Come closer. I have a plan. Listen, now. If you do what I say I will soon be free. And then I will have my revenge. *Caramba!*"

Farak came closer. Cortez sat down again, with a nervous jerk on the edge of the bed, and, in a whisper, began to unfold the plan he had conceived for his escape.

Three days later.

There was a commotion among the police authorities, and the local press was alive with

sensational announcements of the escape of Cortez Mendoza.

He was gone. Not the slightest clue pointed to his trail, and the detectives were at fault.

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Helene had discharged all her servants, converted all her possessions into available funds, and departed very hastily by steamer.

The cause of her haste will be explained anon.

And now we return to the house of the beauty, on Walnut street, Philadelphia, fifteen years subsequent to Helene's flight from New Orleans, and resume our narrative on this stormy night, with the tableau in the parlor, after the appearance and vanishment of the Green Shadow.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 154.)

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PERSEVERANCE, OR THE CLIMBING SPIDER.

JINGLED BY JOE JOE, JR.

Once on a time a spider tried
To climb a slippery wall
He got about a foot or two,
And then he got a fall.

He rubbed himself and got up slow,
And said, "Well, how is this for low!"
He spit upon his hands and said,
"I'll climb that wall or bust!"

He dug his toe-nails in and reached
The same place he was first,
Then fell again, and with a sigh
Said, "This is very bad for high!"

He called to somebody above
To let him down a rope,
But there was no cordwainer there
To give him any hope.

So he got up again quite pale,
And went to looking for a rail.
He wished to lean it 'gainst the wall
With one end on the ground,
And then he got up like a coon—
But oh, no rail was found!

"It seems I can't climb as I used,
There's no one here to give me a 'boost'!"
He growled that he was tired of this,
Got mad and turned quite brown,
He sharpened all his finger-nails,
Went up—and tumbled down.

He said, "Who perseveres oft wins,
And put court-plaster on his shins."
Eight times did he essay to climb
This mean and slippery wall,
And each time he got almost up
Before he got a fall.

Losing about a half a day,
And got no further on his way.
Grown tired of all this useless toil,
Each moment getting madder,
He went down to a farmer's house
And came back with a ladder.

And up the rounds he went all right,
And threw his cap up in delight.
And now this story's good to show
It's well to persevere;
But that the spider was a fool,
To all is very clear.

He might have saved him many a wound,
And lots of time, by going around.

Owl's Head.

BY LAUNCE POYNTE.

A GREAT excitement existed in New York, the day when Major Hargreaves returned to his regiment with a terrible story: that young Norwood had turned out a spy, as he always said he would, had enticed Hargreaves out to the Neutral Ground on pretense of catching a rebel spy, and had then betrayed him into an ambush of Skinners, from whom the major had escaped by a miracle, after killing two of the enemy, and receiving a severe wound in the head. In testimony to his veracity, he appeared with his head bound up, and proclaimed Norwood a spy and deserter. It was certain that the young captain of loyalist rangers never returned, and Hargreaves' story was believed everywhere for some time.

And then flying rumors began to spread that all was not so true as Hargreaves had reported. First one person and then another whispered that they had heard some one else say that they were informed that the two officers had gone out to fight a duel, in which there had been foul play on the part of the major, who wore concealed armor, and had been beaten over the head with a broken sword.

And the rumor spread, in the mysterious way rumors will, that the major had been recommended to sell out by Sir Henry Clinton. This, at least, seemed to be unfounded, however, for Major Hargreaves never left the city, except on duty, and became more intimate than ever at the Van Tassels. Miss Gertrude always received him with the utmost cordiality, and listened to the major's arguments for Divine Right with at least patience, while she developed an interest in military movements that Hargreaves was only too happy to satisfy, by telling her all he knew.

And now also began to spread stories of a daring band of rebel rangers, who made excursions up to the very Harlem river and across it, all of whom were a singular headstrong, made to resemble that of the great horned owl of Virginia. Who these men were, and from whence came they, no one knew, but all agreed that they were the most formidable of the bands that infested the Neutral Ground.

They harried the Tories unmercifully, attacked Skinner and Cowboy alike, and exterminated one party of the Queen's Rangers sent to operate against them. At last Sir Henry, growing angry, dispatched two squadrons of the latter, and two companies of the 60th foot, to find these villains, and placed the whole body under command of Major Hargreaves.

Three days after this, Sir Henry Clinton, fat, puffy and important, was seated in his private room by the fire, with his hankerchief over his face, taking an after-dinner nap. Sir Henry was in excellent spirits, and felt very comfortable. He had just received news that the Owl's Head robbers had been captured or scattered, and their leader taken. That leader had been found out to be none other than Bertram Norwood. Sir Henry felt all the virtuous satisfaction of a good Tory, that there was a justifiable case for hanging a rebel who was, moreover, a deserter. Fill this virtuous satisfaction and happy dreams, he was suddenly roused from his slumbers by a soft tap at the door, and in a moment more he started up and turned round to confront a very handsome and courtly-looking gentleman, splendidly dressed, who advanced smilingly to meet him, saying:

"My dear Sir Henry, I am charmed to see you, indeed. How are you?"

Sir Henry Clinton was a choleric man at best, and to be thus waked out of his nap by his best friend would have "riled" him. As it was, when he realized that the other was an utter stranger to him, and realized, moreover, that he had entered unannounced, leaving the door wide open, when a north-wester was blowing in the streets, Sir Henry's visage turned a deep purple, in which the spots on his usually ruddy complexion burned like fire, while he gasped out:

"Who the devil are you, sir, and where do you come from? SHUT THAT DOOR!"

His last words were bellowed at the top of his voice, as he recovered the breath he had lost in his fury. All the man and Governor, General and baronet, were roused in Sir Henry by the intrusion, and he felt as if he were going to have a fit.

The strange gentleman bowed and smiled politely.

"With pleasure, Sir Henry. I'll look it too."

Which he proceeded to do with all the coolness in the world.

Then for the first time Sir Henry Clinton changed his tone. A suspicion aroused his mind that all was not right. This stranger was so cool and unconcerned, he had entered without alarming the servants. He was armed, and Sir Henry had not a weapon in that room. He was used to leave off the soldier as much as possible in the quiet garrison of New York, and the stranger wore the uniform of an English officer.

It was in a tone of less commanding indignation that he said, "Who are you, sir, and what do you want?"

"I will tell you without unnecessary delay,"

Sir Henry," replied the strange officer, calmly. "Please to resume your seat."

As he spoke he drew from his vest pocket a small pistol, which he cocked. Sir Henry sunk into a chair.

"Are you an assassin?" he gasped.

"Not till you oblige me, Sir Henry," said the other, serenely; "but I warn you that this is a hair-trigger."

Clinton shuddered visibly, and the other continued:

"I tell you what I want here, Sir Henry. I want you to sign an order which I will read to you. Does my pistol annoy you? I am sorry, but my own life is worth as much as yours, and depends on keeping you from ringing the bell."

And the stranger smiled pleasantly as he drew forth a paper from his pocket, unfolded it, and read aloud:

"The officer in command of the provost guard will, immediately on the receipt of this order, release from confinement Captain Bertram Norwood, supply him with horse and arms, and give him back this order as a pass through the lines on his majesty's secret service."

Sir Henry listened, and burst out:

"Never, sir. The deserter shall hang for a deserter and rebel."

The strange officer laid down the paper, and coolly said:

"You'll sign it at once. His majesty's secret service covers a multitude of sins. If you do not sign at once, I'll kill you and forge your name. I'll give you till I count ten."

Slowly and deliberately the stranger counted ten, when he first raised the pistol and covered the Governor. Sir Henry hopped up like a locust and ran to the table, saying, hurriedly:

"Don't shoot. I'll sign."

And he dashed down his name.

The stranger smiled and rung the bell. When the servant knocked, he said: "If you stir or call out, Sir Henry, you're a dead man. I'll do the talking!"

Then he went to the door and handed the order to the servant, saying: "Quick, to the provost marshal with that. The General and I are busy. Bring back word when the officer has executed the order."

Again he shut and locked the door, and faced Sir Henry, smiling.

"You're naturally curious to know who I am, Sir Henry, and why I come here. I'll give you some news. I am Colonel Clarence Norwood, of the staff of General Washington. I am the man who beat your cowardly bully, Hargreaves, for his foul play to my brother. I carried him off from the scene of his duel, which you know of from Miss Van Tassel, sir, and finally, I am a man who has entered this city daily, since the war began, laughed at your spies and found out all your movements. Today I have removed Miss Van Tassel and her cousin, Alice Kip, from this nest of Tories, and my brother and I are to be married to-morrow in New Jersey. Bertram is as good a rebel as I, now, sir, and he has found it is better to fight for one's country than to eat King George's bread. One piece of news and I have done, sir. Lord Cornwallis is penned in at Yorktown by General Washington, and must surrender in a week more. So that, you see, your cause is desperate."

As he spoke, came a tap at the door.

"Captain Ponsonby's compliments, sir, and the gentleman's been sent."

"Very good," said Clarence Norwood, aloud.

"The General's busy, John. You can go."

Then, to Clinton: "You'll see the advisability of hushing up this thing, General. My brother is out of the walls and safe by this time, and if you don't swear to give me an hour, I'll blow your brains out and take it. You can't help yourself, therefore hush it up."

And Sir Henry concluded it was the best thing he could do as things stood.

Not till long after the peace, when the Norwood brothers, with their wives, met him in England, did he ever reveal how he had been tricked; and all had a good laugh at the mystery of the Owl's Head.

'All's Well that Ends Well.'

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

It was all over at last. The house was in the debilitated condition peculiar to houses after some unusually brilliant festive occasion; the evergreen wreaths upon the walls had a drooping look, the flowers which had mingled plentifully in the decorations were brown and wilted; the usually well-ordered rooms were in a litter of confusion, and in the dull gray of the cloudy winter morning, the last of the departing guests took their leave. There were a select few lingering on; one or two of Mrs. Divergne's particular friends who were quite at home with the family, and the quiet young artisan who had been found invaluable in the way of suggesting new amusements, perfecting material arrangements, and not in the least presuming or difficult to dispose of when wanted out of the way. These kept close to their rooms now, however, and after rallying their energies to speak the last farewells smilingly, Mrs. Divergne flung herself down upon a couch in her dressing-room, *en dishabille*, a slight frown corrugating her brow, and a petish expression clouding her still fair face.

The holiday festivities, brilliant and satisfactory to all outward appearance had lacked several important points in fulfilling her expectations and hopes. Gilderoy Divergne, in whose honor the preparations had been made on an unusually extensive scale, had failed to make his appearance; and at the last moment a note had come down from the city and Miriam, coolly excusing the latter's presence because of the expected presence of this very delinquent owner of Wastewild and all its comfortable appointments.

"I am well aware of your charitable intentions," Miriam wrote. "But, my dear Lola, I am decidedly averse to playing the unconscious decoy or bartering myself for even such a magnificent recompense as Wastewild and the Divergne honors. Do let the returned master tread his own halls without having snares laid for his unwary feet. He can't quite turn you out of house and home, and I am content to let fate mold my future after its own caprice."

Little wonder that Mrs. Divergne was bitterly disappointed. All the air-castles she had been so elaborately building went down to ignominious ruin, and left her lacking the heart to attempt their reconstruction.

Her own interests at stake were not so great, but this was such a desirable prospect for Miriam, and her own intentions in the way of matchmaking, when crowned by the happy result, would have been like repaying the loss her sister had sustained through her.

The story is not without plenty of similar instances to rival it in our day. Lucian Divergne had been an enthusiast, rather wild and reckless, but eminently good-hearted, full of all sorts of improbable notions, but so handsome that the unsophisticated little girl he married worshiped and believed in him with all her heart. He was always engaged in speculations which were sure to net him immense returns, and when one after another came to nothing, there was never any blame attached to himself nor any defect of his judgment; always some unlucky hitch which neither far-seeing wisdom nor carefully-managed circumstance could get over. The inevitable result of these same speculations, however, had been his own bankruptcy and the squandering of his wife's fortune. After that came worse. Miriam's portion had been placed under his control; that followed as a matter of course, and seeing Success, which had been a delusive phantom be-

ing when Gilderoy may come. Who is it this time, Miriam?"

An amused smile accompanied the answer. "A youth in his teens, very desperate in his first love, and very annoying in his persistency. A clerk in his father's dry-goods store, and his name," the smile breaking into a rippling laugh, "J. Edd Leslie."

"Oh, how sweet!" It was Gracie's voice now, and Gracie's romantic, novel-fed imagination had already woven out the story of the young suitor's love and despair. "What is he like, auntie dear? I shall love him for the sake of his name."

"I don't doubt it, my dear. And he is like the thousand and one young men you may meet on Broadway any day. Tall and slender, with the faintest shadow of a mustache, and long dark hair, parted in the middle—a very pattern of elegance. I assure you, who spends his salary of a thousand a year in bouquets and essences and gloves, while his father supplies his maintenance and pays his tailor's bills. A very desirable party, you perceive."

Of course Gracie's sympathies were enlisted in favor of the young clerk, seeing which Miriam dismissed the subject.

"What new fancy have you been indulging, Lola? I thought I heard chimes as I came up the stairs."

"Gracie's notion," answered Mrs. Divergne, languidly. "She picked up acquaintance somewhere with a—really, I don't know what else to call him—a toymaker, quite a genius in his line, very agreeable and useful, though not of our standing, of course. He has a workroom fitted up, and his latest idea was a chapel with chimes—very perfect in miniature. I ordered it for the child's New Year's gift, but the poor fellow was kept so busy it is only just completed now. She will take you to see it presently."

Gracie, all eager impatience, dragged her away at the moment. Standing in the little workroom amid its littered contents, admiring the unique piece of workmanship, Miriam met the fate which had been so long coming to her. Never before in all her twenty-six years of life had she so thrilled under the gaze of a pair of honest, manly eyes, or felt such a shock of pitying tenderness, as when the clever artisan had occasion to cross the floor, and with a deprecating glance, reached down by his side for the

crutch which she had not observed before. A cripple? yet working his own way with his hands, cheerful and hopeful, taking evident pride in filling his humble position so well—a position which seemed a singular choice when she had fashioned the rich store of learning he had acquired, and his efficiency in applying it.

"He ought to be a professor, or an author, or an artist," she thought. But she changed her mind when she learned his great love for the little ones, and he explained the principle of his work—leading their minds to an admiration of the beautiful through these fair creations of his hands, which appealed to them.

Mrs. Divergne did not remain unconscious of the state of affairs. Her sister's awakened interest in the handsome toymaker, and his grateful reciprocity of the same, was very patent to that lady's watchfulness. She undertook a remonstrance one afternoon, a proceeding most unwise, but then Mrs. Divergne had never been noted for the tact which can find for itself the clearest way out of a difficulty.

"I don't know what you mean, Miriam," she said, peevishly. "If you throw over Wastewild and Gilderoy for that beggarly workman, a cripple, too, I must say you deserve the fate you will bring upon yourself. You wouldn't be recognized among people with whom you've mingled heretofore, you'd have to pinch and live poor all your days, and poor Gilderoy—Really, I should think you would have some regard for what is expected of you now, Miriam."

The plaintive reproach was lost upon Miriam. Dispatches had come from Gilderoy, and letters which had been delayed weeks upon the way. This consummation which Mrs. Divergne so ardently wished, had amounted to almost a tacit understanding from the date her young brother-in-law by his efforts had saved her husband's name from the reproach which would otherwise have attached to it; and with the rest came an outspoken, straightforward missive to Miriam, asking her in so many words to be his wife.

"He might have waited to pass judgment upon me first," the latter thought, a little bitterly. She was making ready now for a return flight cityward, and turned this occasion to fit a commission she had been purposing to leave with the elder sister.

"Whoever I chance to marry, it shall certainly not be Gilderoy Divergne," she answered. "I leave you the task of declining in my name the proposal he has honored me by making. I shall leave Wastewild in the morning, Lola."

"Miriam, are you going to throw yourself away on that Vernet?"

"Mr. Vernet has not given me an opportunity by asking. I only hope Heaven may send me as honest a heart if I ever make a choice."

With that retort wrung from her, and a hot fire burning in her cheeks, Miriam went down to pace an arbor-walk, where the thick matting of vines, though leafless, were a protecting screen. George Vernet sought and found her there an hour later.

"I am glad to find you alone," he said, quietly. "I am going away to-morrow. Miss Miriam, and have come to say good-by."

"I would tell you how much I shall wish for your happiness—your sister has just been telling me your prospects—as future mistress of Waste-



OWL'S HEAD.—II.

fore him, always just ahead, he had committed a forgery, confident that the ill-gotten loan thrown into the balance would more than redeem all his losses and place him on a secure basis again. It shared the fate of all that had gone before, and in a fit of desperation, Lucian Divergne wrote an imploring note to his younger brother, Gilderoy, and sent a bullet crushing through the brain which had originated so many brilliant illusions.

The younger brother executed the trust left to him nobly. The bereaved wife never even suspected the frailty of the husband who had been most tender to her. Wastewild, matched by liabilities beyond its utmost value, was bought in, and the widow, with her little sunny-haired daughter, left to its undisturbed occupancy. Miriam was offered a home there as well, but her spirit of independence rose up in arms, and she accepted instead the position of companion to a distant relative of her own, whose strong fancy for the girl would not permit her to remain on any except terms of perfect equality. So she had been launched upon the gay tide of city life, had been a favorite with a class, and had her admirers, but in the eight years which had passed she had not married.

These were the incidents running through Mrs. Divergne's weary, disordered brain, as she lay on the luxurious couch before a cheery, blazing fire. Below, the servants were busy clearing away the reminders of the past gayeties. Sixteen-year-old Gracie yawned over a book in the window-seat; even she had caught the depressing infection, and grew dull under its influence.

Her book went spinning to an opposite corner, suddenly, and her face lighted with an expression of interest.

"Somebody is coming, mamma. Who can it be? Of all times in the year, just now when the dulllest season begins for us. Suppose it should be uncle Gilderoy at last? I'm going to see!"

"Stay where you are, Gracie," her mother commanded, pettishly. "It's the furniture van or the grocer's cart. Hark!"

She roused up with the tinkling of the bell at the front entrance. Some one, after all, and Gracie, disregarding the maternal mandate, which never weighed very heavily, flew out to meet the visitor at the head of the stairway, with a little smothered scream of delight and a profusion of feminine caresses.

"Miriam—you!" Mrs. Divergne exclaimed as the two entered the chamber without ceremony. "Of all surprises, this is the greatest, and after disappointing me, too."

"Twice, I presume," laughed Miriam, divesting herself of her wrappings and proceeding to make herself at home in a low chair by the side of the marble hearth. "I would not be here now, but I heard that there was no lion to beard, and I had my own evil destiny of the hour to escape."

"Of course!" Her sister's rejoinder was tinged with undue acerbity. "It's the thirteenth occasion of the kind you've run down here to escape, isn't it? and you on the shady side of the old maid's corner?"

"Twenty-six, my dear Lola."

"I wouldn't mind if you weren't so determined to be obstinate, and now there's no tell-

ing when Gilderoy may come. Who is it this time, Miriam?"

An amused smile accompanied the answer. "A youth in his teens, very desperate in his first love, and very annoying in his persistency. A clerk in his father's dry-goods store, and his name," the smile breaking into a rippling laugh, "J. Edd Leslie."

"Oh, how sweet!" It was Gracie's voice now, and Gracie's romantic, novel-fed imagination had already woven out the story of the young suitor's love and despair. "What is he like, auntie dear? I shall love him for the sake of his name."

"I don't doubt it, my dear. And he is like the thousand and one young men you may meet on Broadway any day. Tall and slender, with the faintest shadow of a mustache, and long dark hair, parted in the middle—a very pattern of elegance. I assure you, who spends his salary of a thousand a year in bouquets and essences and gloves, while his father supplies his maintenance and pays his tailor's bills. A very desirable party, you perceive."

Of course Gracie's sympathies were enlisted in favor of the young clerk, seeing which Miriam dismissed the subject.

"What new fancy have you been indulging, Lola? I thought I heard chimes as I came up the stairs."

"Gracie's notion," answered Mrs. Divergne, languidly. "She picked up acquaintance somewhere with a—really, I don't know what else to call him—a toymaker, quite a genius in his line, very agreeable and useful, though not of our standing, of course. He has a workroom fitted up, and his latest idea was a chapel with chimes—very perfect in miniature. I ordered it for the child's New Year's gift, but the poor fellow was kept so busy it is only just completed now. She will take you to see it presently."

Gracie, all eager impatience, dragged her away at the moment. Standing in the little workroom amid its littered contents, admiring the unique piece of workmanship, Miriam met the fate which had been so long coming to her. Never before in all her twenty-six years of life had she so thrilled under the gaze of a pair of honest, manly eyes, or felt such a shock of pitying tenderness, as when the clever artisan had occasion to cross the floor, and with a deprecating glance, reached down by his side for the

crutch which she had not observed before. A cripple? yet working his own way with his hands, cheerful and hopeful, taking evident pride in filling his humble position so well—a position which seemed a singular choice when she had fashioned the rich store of learning he had acquired, and his efficiency in applying it.

"He ought to be a professor, or an author, or an artist," she thought. But she changed her mind when she learned his great love for the little ones, and he explained the principle of his work—leading their minds to an admiration of the beautiful through these fair creations of his hands, which appealed to them.

Mrs. Divergne did not remain unconscious of the state of affairs. Her sister's awakened interest in the handsome toymaker, and his grateful reciprocity of the same, was very patent to that lady's watchfulness. She undertook a remonstrance one afternoon, a proceeding most unwise, but then Mrs. Divergne had never been noted for the tact which can find for itself the clearest way out of a difficulty.

"I don't know what you mean, Miriam," she said, peevishly. "If you throw over Wastewild and Gilderoy for that beggarly workman, a cripple, too, I must say you deserve the fate you will bring upon yourself. You wouldn't be recognized among people with whom you've mingled heretofore, you'd have to pinch and live poor all your days, and poor Gilderoy—Really, I should think you would have some regard for what is expected of you now, Miriam."

The plaintive reproach was lost upon Miriam. Dispatches had come from Gilderoy, and letters which had been delayed weeks upon the way. This consummation which Mrs. Divergne so ardently wished, had amounted to almost a tacit understanding from the date her young brother-in-law by his efforts had saved her husband's name from the reproach which would otherwise have attached to it; and with the rest came an outspoken, straightforward missive to Miriam, asking her in so many words to be his wife.

"He might have waited to pass judgment upon me first," the latter thought, a little bitterly. She was making ready now for a return flight cityward, and turned this occasion to fit a commission she had been purposing to leave with the elder sister.

"Whoever I chance to marry, it shall certainly not be Gilderoy Divergne," she answered. "I leave you the task of declining in my name the proposal he has honored me by making. I shall leave Wastewild in the morning, Lola."

"Miriam, are you going to throw yourself away on that Vernet?"

"Mr. Vernet has not given me an opportunity by asking. I only hope Heaven may send me as honest a heart if I ever make a choice."

With that retort wrung from her, and a hot fire burning in her cheeks, Miriam went down to pace an arbor-walk, where the thick matting of vines, though leafless, were a protecting screen. George Vernet sought and found her there an hour later.

"I am glad to find you alone," he said, quietly. "I am going away to-morrow. Miss Miriam, and have come to say good-by."

"I would tell you how much I shall wish for your happiness—your sister has just been telling me your prospects—as future mistress of Waste-

wild and chosen bride of its owner," he added, meeting the surprised glance of her brown eyes.

"Then Lola has stooped to deceit. I shall never be one or the other, Mr. Vernet."

There was oppressive silence for a moment, which his low, thrilling tones broke.

"It seems the height of presumptuous folly to speak of myself, if you have refused that, Miriam. But I love you, and I have not even dared hope for the joy of calling you my wife. I can't ask it now—it would be too great a sacrifice to you."

Nevertheless, before two minutes had passed he had asked it, and Miriam had pledged her hand where her heart had long been given. While they stood in the waning sunshine, blissfully silent in those first moments, there came a sound of steps and voices from the opposite side of the vine-wreathed arch.

"But you were so desperately in love with aunt Miriam, you know," in Gracie's tones, "and I was sorry for you, and if you weren't serious then—" hesitatingly.

"Don't throw up that folly to me, Gracie, I implore. All a passing fancy, and I knew better soon as I saw you—"

Steps and voices grew indistinct.

"Who was that?" asked Vernet, with some interest.

"J. Edd Leslie," answered Miriam, with a smile. "He followed me down here a week ago, with the declared intention of throwing himself off the wharf in case of a second rejection at my hands—and that is the result."

Vernet answered her smile and would have drawn her away, but at the moment the youthful couple turned an angle and came facing the other two in the arbor-walk. The elegant clerk stared a moment and then gave Gracie a surprised glance.

"You didn't tell me your uncle was here," he said. "Glad to see you, Mr. Divergne. Hope I did that little business all correct."

Vernet answered Miriam's startled, questioning look when the others had passed.

He brought down the dispatches from Gilderoy Divergne—my own messenger when I was in the city a week ago. The accident which left me maimed for life made me timid, and I longed so for a true woman's love. I kept the secret from even Lola until an hour ago, but Gracie knew from the first. Don't you understand, dear, that I am Gilderoy Divergne, and you are to be mistress of Wastewild, after all?"

She was, and no less happy for her stately surroundings than if she had wedded in reality the poor crippled toymaker she thought him. The chiming in the miniature steeple rung for their wedding, and from all appearances they will ring again some day to the union of two foolishly fond young hearts—pretty Gracie and her devoted boy-lover.

ALL ABOUT CANARY BIRDS.—I.

As this is the season of the year when the canary bird is an especial favorite, and a great many persons are going to purchase one, it may not be inopportune for us to tell our readers something about the pretty pets.

The original canary birds, which came from the Canary Islands, were of a greenish-gray color, much smaller than the present variety, and resembling in appearance the little sparrows which are so numerous in this city. Being easily bred in cages, they have become, by constant cross-breeding, of various shades of color, from light yellow to a grayish brown, and have reached the peculiarities of song which the breed now possesses. They were introduced in Europe in the beginning of the fifteenth century, where they soon became exceedingly popular and great favorites with the people. It is related that the crew of a trading vessel which touched at the Canary Islands in one of its voyages, obtained a number of the native birds of the islands on account of the beautiful notes of song they possessed, but the vessel was wrecked off the coast of the Island of Elba, and the birds escaped to the woods near the shores. They bred rapidly, filling the woods with their species. The wild, sweet notes of the birds attracted the attention of the natives, who hunted them so continually that the breed, as a wild one, soon disappeared. The first tame canaries were raised in Italy; but the business of raising and breeding them soon extended into Germany, which is, at the present time, the principal country in this employment. In the Hartz Mountains they are bred extensively by the peasants, who, in many instances, make the raising of these birds their chief means of subsistence. The greater part of the canaries imported into this country are obtained from this locality, although Holland, Belgium and Saxony furnish a large share. They are not only sent to this country, but are exported to almost every civilized country on the globe. In Germany large buildings are used for the breeding purposes, and men and women are employed to attend to them continually. As